

PEACE BE UNTO YOU,

HELLO EVERYBODY, I'M HASSON RASHID, AND I RESIDE AT 820 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, TODAY, I'M HERE TO COMMENT ON "AWAITING REPORT LIST ITEM# 15-03,15-53; AND COMMUNICATION # ITEM#1, AND ANY OF THE OTHER ITEMS ON TODAYS AGENDA THAT I MAY HAVE MISSED ANNOUNCING." ON JUNE 16, 2015 THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMNT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HELD A HEARING ON TITLE V OF THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESSNESS ACT OF 1987, TO EXAMINE IT'S SURPLUS PROPERTY PROVISION. MARIA FOSCARINIS OF THE NATONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY, GAVE TESTIMONY ON THE TITLE V OF THE MCKINNEY -VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANT ACT DURING THE HEARING. OTHERS ALSO GAVE TESTIMONIES CONCERNING THE ACT. YOU'LL FIND THEM ADDED AS LINKS AT THE END OF THIS WRITTEN PUBLIC COMEMET. THE HEARING WAS TITLED "SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLAR IN FEDERAL REAL ESTATE: REDUCING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'T SPACE FOOTPRINT," THE HEARING EXAMINED WAYS OF REFORMING HOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DISPOSES OF ITS SURPLUS PROPERTY.

WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NO LONGER HAS USE FOR A PROPERTY, THE PROPERTY IS USUALLY DECLEARED TO BE SURPLUS. UNDER TITLE V, HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS HAVE A RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL TO ACQUIRE SURPLUS PROPERTY, AT NO COST BEFORE THE PROPERTY CAN BE OFFERED TO STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OR BE SOLD TO GENERATE REVENUE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

I HAVE BEEN CONTENDING HERE ALL ALONG AT THESE PUBLIC MEETING AT CITY HALL AND OTHER PLACES, THAT VOLPE CENTER ADMINSTRATION CIRCUMVENTED AND REMOVED, THE LOCAL HOMELESS SECTOR AND MOSAIC, FROM THE PLANNING EQUATION FOR THE VOLPE, INVIOATION OF FEDERAL MANDATES.

LET ME QUOTE WHAT MS FOSCARINIS STATED IN HER TESTIMONY, " THE MCKINNY-VENTO ACT WAS INTENDED TO EXPAND AND COORDINATE FEDERAL RESOUCES AND PROGRAMS, TO ADDRESS THE CRITICALLY URGENT NEEDS' OF HOMELESS AMERICANS. THE TITLE V SURPLUS FEDERAL PROPERTY PROGRAM IS CENTRAL TO THIS OVERARCHING MISSION. TITLE V IS A PROVEN VEHICLE FOR ASSISTING AMERICA'S HOMELESS WITH NO COST TO TAXPAYERS. GOING FORWARD, WE ARE COMMITTED TO PURSUING ALL AVIALBLE AVENUES TO ENSURE THAT THE FEDERAL AGENICIES, DO NOT CONTINUE TO HOARD SURPLUS PROPERTY, THAT COULD BE PUT TO BETTER USE TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES. CONGRESS SHOULD ENSURE THAT SURPLUS PROPERTIES ARE PUT TO BETTER, MORE PRODUCTIVE USE WHILE REDUCING COSTS TO TAXPAYERS."

I THINK THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR THE FOUNDRY BUILDING AND THE SULLIVAN COURT HOUSE, THERE AGAIN ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF HOW THE HOMELESS SECTOR AND MOSAIC IS GETTING BLOCK OUT OF THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS TO BE INCLUDED. HOMELESSNESS IS AN OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE, CONFIRMED BY OUR LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNEMENTS, AND OFFICIALLY OF THE HIGHEST PPRORITY IN OTHER SECTORS OF OUR SOCIETY AT LARGE. THANK YOU.

YOURS IN PEACE,

MR. HASSON J. RASHID,

CAMBRIDGE, MA 6/22/2015

## **House Hearing Examines Surplus Property Provision of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

**On June 16, Maria Foscarinis of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty testified on Title V of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 during a hearing held by the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The hearing titled, “Saving Taxpayer Dollars in Federal Real Estate: Reducing the Federal Government’s Space Footprint,” examined ways of reforming how the federal government disposes of its surplus real property.**

**When the federal government no longer has use for a property, the property is usually declared to be surplus. Under Title V, homeless service providers have a right of first refusal to acquire surplus property at no cost before the property can be offered to state or local governments or be sold to generate revenue for the federal government.**

**In her testimony, Ms. Foscarinis stated, “The McKinney-Vento Act was intended to expand and coordinate federal resources and programs to address the ‘critically urgent needs’ of homeless Americans. The Title V surplus federal property program is central to this overarching mission. Title V is a proven vehicle for assisting America’s homeless with no cost to taxpayers. Going forward, we are committed to pursuing all available avenues to ensure that federal agencies do not continue to hoard surplus property that could be put to better use to improve the lives of homeless individuals and families. Congress should ensure that surplus properties are put to better, more productive use while reducing costs to taxpayers.”**

**Ms. Foscarinis offered several policy recommendations for improving Title V, including:**

- Require federal agencies to make property that is vacant or unused for one year available for uses for homeless services.**
- Streamline the Title V application process to ensure it is fair and efficient for homeless assistance providers.**
- Transfer the Department of Health and Human Services’ responsibility of reviewing and approving Title V applications to HUD in order to reduce bureaucratic redundancy.**

**Subcommittee Chair Lou Barletta (R-PA) said he and the Subcommittee looked forward to working with Ms. Foscarinis on this issue.**

Hearing :

**Saving Taxpayer Dollars in Federal Real Estate: Reducing the Government's Space Footprint**

2167 Rayburn House Office Building

ft#e

0 Tuesday, June 16, 2015 @ 01:00 | Contact: Contact: Jim Billimoria 202-225-9446

This is a hearing of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

Summary of Subject Matter

**Witnesses:**

- U.S. Rep. Jeff Denham (R-PA), Chairman, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
- U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
- The Honorable David Mader, Controller, Office of Management and Budget | Written Testimony
- Mr. David J. Wise, Director, Physical Infrastructure Team, U.S. Government Accountability Office | Written Testimony
- Mr. Norman Dong, Commissioner, Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration | Written Testimony
- Ms. Maria Foscarnis, Executive Director, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty | Written Testimony

**Chairman Lou Barletta (R-PA)**

**Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management**

**Hearing on "Saving Taxpayer Dollars in Federal Real Estate: Reducing the Government's Space Footprint"**

**June 16, 2015**

**Opening Statement**

**(Remarks as Prepared)**

The purpose of today's hearing is to explore how we can save billions of dollars by shrinking our federal real estate footprint. I think we have a tremendous opportunity this year to come up with a bipartisan bill that gains the support of the House, the Senate, and the President. We have the same goal: to get excess and underutilized properties out of the hands of government and onto the local tax rolls or local service providers. This can be a win-win solution for the taxpayer, local governments, and homeless assistance providers.

First let me thank Chairman Chaffetz of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for working closely with this committee on this important issue. I also want to thank Chairman Denham for his work and leadership on this issue. And, finally, I want to thank all of our witnesses and, in particular OMB Controller Mader, for being here today.

We know reducing the federal real estate footprint is a critical issue and can result in real and significant savings for the taxpayer. For example, since the beginning of last Congress, our committee has saved more than \$2.5 billion by approving leases and other projects that reduce and consolidate space. That was no small feat, and it took this committee, working with GSA and OMB, to realize those savings.

Our subcommittee also has hosted a series of roundtables, working with GSA, to send the message of optimizing space and replacing expiring leases with good, long-term deals. In some ways the leased side of federal real estate is easier to address – when leases expire, an opportunity is created to reduce space and negotiate good lease deals to lower costs. And, with 100 million square feet of leased space expiring in the next five years – 50% of GSA's leased inventory – the opportunity for taxpayer savings is huge. In light of that, I recently introduced the Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act, which will create a leasing pilot program GSA can use to cut the best deals for the taxpayer.

Today, however, we are focusing on a much more difficult problem: getting rid of federal real estate we no longer need. According to the most recent Federal Real Property Summary, the government owns more than 254,000 buildings, comprising 2.5 billion square feet of space, costing the taxpayer \$14.4 billion annually. However, we are also told in the same summary that only 5,000 buildings are actually underutilized, despite the fact that 27,000 assets are labeled as "inactive." It is clear the data needs improving, but it is also clear based on work by GAO and others that there are a lot of vacant or underutilized buildings across the Nation that go unreported.

We don't have to look far to see prime examples of this right here in Washington. Just down the street sits the vacant Cotton Annex on land worth more than \$100 million dollars. On Pennsylvania Avenue it took more than a decade and an act of Congress to turn the money-losing Old Post Office building into a profit center for the taxpayer. The West Heating Plant in Georgetown sat vacant for more than a decade, and it wasn't until this Committee shined a spotlight on it did GSA finally sell it for almost \$20 million dollars.

When these properties sit vacant or underutilized, no one wins. The agencies and taxpayer pay to maintain them, no tax dollars are infused into the local economies, and they are not made available for sale or even screened for other purposes, such as to

serve the homeless.

Previous estimates indicate we are wasting more than \$1.6 billion a year on these properties, but if GAO reports are any indication, this is probably a low estimate.

Today, we hope to hear from our witnesses: what is the scope of the problem, what are the obstacles to reducing the real estate footprint, and how do we overcome those hurdles. A few challenges we have seen include upfront costs to make properties available (including money to move people out of underutilized buildings), land-banking (agencies holding on to valuable but vacant properties because they think someday they will need them), and a disposal process that is cumbersome, time consuming, and keeps properties from being sold. Chairman Chaffetz and Chairman Denham in the past have each offered proposals to address these issues, and I am pleased to see them working together on this issue.

The Administration proposed legislation in 2011 and reiterated the importance of that legislation in the fiscal year 2016 budget. In fact, in the fiscal year 2016 budget, the Administration states that despite the progress made through efforts like Freeze the Footprint, an independent board would allow us to achieve long-desired opportunities for reform and deficit reduction.

Again, I want to again thank all the witnesses here today. We have a great opportunity to finally get a bipartisan bill through Congress and address this long standing problem.

# # #

The webcast and Ms. Fosearinis' written testimony are at <http://transportation.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=398987>

<http://gsablogs.gsa.gov/gsablog/2015/06/22/mas-transformation-update-new-tools-are-transforming-acquisition/>

**Links to Written Testimonies:**

- <http://transportation.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2015-06-16-mader.pdf>
- <http://transportation.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2015-06-16-wise.pdf>
- <http://transportation.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2015-06-16-dong.pdf>
- <http://transportation.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2015-06-16-fosecarinis.pdf>