



March 28, 2024

The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Luetkemeyer:

The Community Home Lenders of America (CHLA)¹ writes to advise you that our organization's Board, on behalf of our members nationwide, has voted to endorse your House Resolution 612, "Acknowledging the service, sacrifice, and courage of veterans and ensuring that Congress imposes no additional fee or cost for benefits earned through service."

CHLA has long believed veterans and active-duty servicemembers should receive their earned benefits as promised, and these earned benefits should not then be used as "pay-fors" for unrelated Congressional spending.

Congress has used fees for nearly all its federal housing programs to fund other programs; such actions raise the price of homeownership beyond the actuarially-correct number needed to ensure the safety and soundness of these programs. The additional fee increases not used to protect taxpayers make these programs out of reach for those families most sensitive to higher costs, and also add extra out-of-pocket costs to families that do use the programs.

In the case of the VA mortgage, this practice is especially troubling. Unlike the other federal housing programs, this one is a key component of the bargain Congress has made to our all-volunteer armed forces. This nation incents rather than compels its citizens to defend us all. Aside from pay, the benefits package is considered a key component of recruitment and retention, and the VA home mortgage is in turn a major part of the overall benefits package.

Those who voluntarily join our armed forces and serve have earned their benefits outright; Congress ought not make them pay yet again by hiking the cost of these benefits beyond the fair price of risk protection.

Thank you for introducing this important resolution.

THE COMMUNITY HOME LENDERS OF AMERICA

¹ CHLA is the only national trade association that exclusively represents independent mortgage bankers (IMBs). CHLA members are small and mid-sized, community-based IMBs, whose sole business is originating and servicing residential mortgage loans.