

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman André Carson recently spoke on the House Floor in support of H.R. 5818, the Neighborhood Stabilization Act of 2008. H.R. 5818 passed in the House today by a 239 to 188 vote margin. Below are Congressman Carson’s remarks:

“Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of HR 5818, the Neighborhood Stabilization Act of 2008. This bill is extremely important to me as a Representative from Indiana’s Seventh Congressional District. My district has suffered from disproportionately high rates of foreclosures. In fact, Indiana has consistently rated among the top 10 states nationally for foreclosures along with Michigan and Ohio.

“These foreclosures have led to an alarming number of vacancies. I live on the Near-East side of Indianapolis and streets in my community are lined with many empty, boarded homes. In fact, there are 7,000 vacant homes in Indianapolis. In the Mapleton Fall Creek Neighborhood, a community located around the corner from my house, there are over 60 vacant and boarded homes.

“We frequently hear how housing vacancies have a negative impact on property values, but as someone who has spent their career in law enforcement, I know that vacancies can also foster violence and theft in our neighborhoods. This bill can help communities rebuild property value and maintain stability in our neighborhoods.

“I would also like to thank Congresswoman McCarthy and Congressman Capuano for working with me on an amendment in committee to include first responders to the list of those states may establish preferences for in their housing priorities.

“As a career law enforcement officer and first responder, I know how important it is to have these courageous individuals in our communities. I have seen first hand the dedication and passion these firefighters, emergency medical service providers and police officers have for others. They put their lives at risk everyday for the safety of those in our cities, so it is fitting and essential that we recognize their work and give them preference for housing in our communities. I am pleased this amendment received bipartisan support and was incorporated in the bill.

“This bill is a responsible and thoughtful piece of legislation and I want to commend Chairman Frank and Chairwoman Waters for their outstanding work on HR 5818.

“Thank you Madam Speaker and I yield back the balance of my time.”