



# In the Trenches and Getting the Work Done: Congressional Committees and Subcommittees

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When the President signs a major piece of legislation into law, what we see are the results of that legislation. What we sometimes don't see is the tortuous path the legislation has traveled — through committees and subcommittees. It is in these meetings that the real work is done. Congress members hold hearings, draft language, debate the issues, and revise, revise, revise. In these members-only meetings each word of the proposed legislation is scrutinized, each nuance addressed and consequence discussed. It is also here, where special interests are addressed, that America's public policy can be changed.

The aftermath of the November elections produced a number of Senate seat changes. Several members of Congress also retired. As we went to press, many committees' and subcommittees' leadership had been decided but many of those crucial to the affordable housing industry had not.

Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Ark.) replaces Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) as the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) becomes the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, with Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) as the ranking minority member.

With the retirement of Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) becomes the chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee; Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) will be the ranking minority member.

The leadership of the Senate VA/HUD/Independent Agencies Subcommittee and the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation has not been decided.

Leadership of the House Appropriations Committee does not change. Rep. C.W. Bill Young (R-Fla.) will remain as chairman and Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.) as

the ranking minority member. Rep. Jim Nussle (R-Iowa) remains chairman of the House Budget Committee. The ranking minority member position has not yet been decided.

Rep. Michael Oxley (R-Ohio) remains chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, and with the retirement of Rep. John LaFalce (D-N.Y.), Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) will be the ranking minority member.

Leadership of the House VA/HUD/Independent Agencies Subcommittee is expected to stay the same, with Rep. James Walsh (R-N.Y.) as the chairman and Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-W.Va.) as the ranking minority member.

With the retirement of Chairwoman Marge Roukema (R-N.J.), the chairman position of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity has not yet been decided, nor has the ranking minority member position.

As Boston Capital's David Gasson points out in a related story on page ???, the industry has lost a few housing advocates, like Marge Roukema (R-N.J.), but housing advocates Reps. Nancy Johnson (R-Conn.) and Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), and Sens. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.) and John Kerry (D-Mass.) are likely sources of support in the coming few years. Add to those the names of Reps. Harold Ford Jr. (D-Tenn.), Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.), Phil English (R-Penn.), J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and, in a time when budget considerations are shifting toward homeland security, the industry has excellent Congressional support on which to build its case for the continued passage of housing related legislation. We urge all affordable housing and community development professionals to persist in efforts to be heard behind Congressional committee and subcommittee doors. ❖

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*The Four Seasons Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev.*

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Laying a New Course for a Changing Market  
*Renaissance Miami- Biscayne Bay, Miami, Fla.*

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