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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY FOR S. 3066
THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974

THE EAST ROOM

2:15 P.M. EDT

Secretary Lynn, my former colleagues in the House and Senate, distinguished guests:

It is a great privilege to be here on this landmark day in the field of housing legislation. It is landmark in that it has a new impact on community development and housing legislation generally. I think it was Chairman Sparkman who said that this new legislation is the most significant community development legislation since the 1949 act. He added, however, that this legislation is the most significant in the field of housing legislation since the 1934 act.

There seems to be almost universal agreement that very significant progress has been made. I think we can say without any reservation that the move from the narrow programs of the past in community development to programs that are very broad gauged, a consolidation of programs such as model cities and urban development, will give a real impetus to local decision making, local action and local responsibility, and I am confident that the mayors, the Governors, the other local officials will assume that decision making, that action and that responsibility.

In the field of housing, there are some innovative efforts. There are some extensions of existing programs. The housing industry needs a shot in the arm and this bill, I think, can be extremely helpful in this area.

I would be very remiss if I did not pay tribute to the long and, I think, skillful efforts of those both in the Executive branch and those in the Congressional field for what has been accomplished.

I know how hard Jim Lynn has worked, how hard Jim Mitchell has worked, but I think those in the Congress, particularly those who were on the conference, deserve a very special tribute.

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I know at times it seemed like an impossible obstacle to overcome the vast differences between the House and Senate version, but by patience, by understanding, by the kind of give and take and compromise we -- not just myself and a few -- but we the American people, are the beneficiaries.

I think Chairman Patman, Bill Widnall, Chairman Sparkman, Senator Tower, deserve very special commendation. We are very grateful for what they did, but if I might be a little provincial or parochial, it seems to me that the Middle West, from which some of us come, deserves a little pat on the back.

Congressman Lud Ashley did a fine job. My former colleague from Michigan, Garry Brown, did a superb job, and then in addition, Jim Lynn and Jim Mitchell.

So, when we add it all up, that document right there will, I think, write new pages of history in community development and housing production. I said a moment ago, we are all the beneficiaries of the dedication, the service, the patience, the understanding of this group of men and many others.

I thank them on behalf of all of you and many, many millions of others throughout our country. Congratulations.

I should add a postscript. I have shaken hands, I think, in the last 24 hours with virtually every Member of the House and Senate, not once, but several times. We are going to have a reception, and I won't feel offended in the least if the Members of the Congress avoid me and go to the State Dining Room, and we will have a reception when this breaks up.

It is real nice to see you all.

END (2:20 P.M. EDT)