

NACo Legislative Bulletin

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House Passes Child Welfare Waivers Bill

House Passes Roth 457 Amendment in Small Business Lending Fund Act

National Flood Insurance Program Extended Until September 2011

Commissioner Gouge Testifies on the Livable Communities Act

House Passes Child Welfare Waivers Bill

On September 23, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6156, which extends the HHS Secretary's authority to grant state waivers in the child welfare and foster care system. The bill, which passed by voice vote, will extend the authority for five years. States and counties have used the waivers to implement innovative approaches such as flexible spending, subsidized guardianship, and post-permanency services. Senate action has not been determined.

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House Passes Roth 457 Amendment in Small Business Lending Fund Act

The House today accepted the Senate Amendments to H.R. 5297, the Small Business Lending Fund Act of 2010. This bill includes a provision to allow those participating in Section 457 plans to do so through a Roth retirement plan. Those who use Roth Plans do not receive a deduction from their current income for a contribution to the plan, but they do earn returns within the plan tax free and the withdrawals from the plan are tax free.

Inclusion of a governmental Roth 457 provision, which permits 457(b) plans to offer the designated Roth accounts already permitted in 401(k) and 403(b) plans levels the playing field for state and local government workers. The President is expected to sign the legislation.

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National Flood Insurance Program Extended Until September 2011

During the week, both the Senate and House approved legislation to authorize FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) until next year. Sponsored by Senator David Vitter (R-La.) S.3814 was approved by unanimous consent in the Senate, and the House quickly supported the bill by suspension of the rules. The bill extends the NFIP from September 30, 2010, through September 30, 2011, and ensures that businesses and residents can continue to write and renew flood insurance coverage.

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Commissioner Gouge Testifies on the Livable Communities Act

On September 23, 2010, Carroll County, Md. Board of Commissioners President Julia Gouge testified on behalf of NACo at the House Financial Services Committee hearing on the "Perspectives on the Livable Communities Act", H.R. 4690. The legislation introduced by Representative Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.) would provide close to \$4 billion in funding over four years to regions and localities for sustainable development planning



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and implementation around housing, transportation, environmental and land use projects. It would also formally establish the Interagency Council on Sustainable Communities, an existing partnership between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban development, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency focused on better coordination among federal agencies on sustainability issues including research and grants.

During her testimony, Commissioner Gouge discussed the importance of rural, suburban and urban counties being eligible for these federal incentive grants. She noted many counties have been utilizing sustainable planning for decades. However, many rural and mid-size counties would like to begin such planning, but lack the resources to do.

The Senate Banking Committee Chairman-Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), who introduced the Senate bill, S.1619 held a hearing on the Livable Communities Act in June 2010, at which Commissioner Gouge also testified on behalf of NACo. Senator Dodd held a Committee mark-up of the bill, which reduced the authorized funding level from \$4 billion to \$2.675 billion over four years and included a 15 percent rural set aside for communities under 200,000 in population. No mark-up date has been scheduled yet in the House.

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About

National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the U. S. NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money.

NACo

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