



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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General Gordon R. Sullivan
United States Army (Ret.)
President

23 March 2009

On behalf of the more than 105,000 members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to urge you to amend the eligibility date for military Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP) participation from 1 July 2006 to 1 July 2008.

The recently enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 extends provisions of the HAP to military personnel who receive permanent change of station (PCS) orders to a location more than 50 miles from their current duty station, whose orders are dated between 1 February 2006 and 30 September 2012 and whose home was purchased before 1 July 2006.

While grateful for the inclusion of eligible military personnel, AUSA believes that the 1 July 2006 date, while within the beginning of a diminishing housing market, excludes many military personnel who purchased prudently after that date, perhaps expecting not to make money, but not envisioning the "once in a century" loss of value that occurred after the summer of 2008.

While in the past, most PCS occurred after three years, in this time of war and repeated deployments, many are occurring after only two years. Servicemembers who bought after July 2006 and in 2007 are now facing home sales in a dramatically altered housing market.

These military families purchased in good faith, but by complying with military orders, they will suffer significant financial loss. Unlike civilians, military personnel cannot quit their jobs if they cannot afford sell their homes, and foreclosure or failure to maintain good credit by military personnel can result in loss of security clearance, and in some cases, loss of rank.

Our volunteer military force, willing to fight for our nation, should not be forced to forego the benefits of homeownership or be penalized for being homeowners. Amend the effective date of the HAP PCS program to one that better reflects the date of the catastrophic housing market downturn.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN

General, USA Retired