



**Legislative Bulletin.....May 6, 2008**

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**Summary of the Bills Under Consideration Today:**

**Total Number of New Government Programs:** 6

**Total Cost of Discretionary Authorizations:** \$85 million in FY 2009 and \$439 million over the FY 2009 through FY 2013

**Effect on Revenue:** Increased less than \$500,000 annually

**Total Change in Mandatory Spending:** \$0

**Total New State & Local Government Mandates:** \$0

**Total New Private Sector Mandates:** 0

**Number of Bills Without Committee Reports:** 7

**Number of Reported Bills that Don't Cite Specific Clauses of Constitutional Authority:** 1

**H.Res. 1086—Recognizing National Nurses Week on May 6 through May 12, 2008 (Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-TX)**

**Order of Business:** H.Res. 1086 is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

**Summary:** H.Res. 1086 would express the sense that the House:

- “Recognizes the significant contributions of nurses to the health care system of the United States;
- “Supports the goals and ideals of National Nurses Week, as founded by the American Nurses Association; and
- “Encourages the people of the United States to observe National Nurses Week with appropriate recognition, ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate the importance of nurses to the everyday lives of patients.”

The resolution lists a number of findings, including:

- “Since 2003, National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6, also known as National Nurses Day, through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing;
- “National Nurses Week is the time each year when nurses are recognized for the critical role they play in providing safe, high-quality, and preventative health care;
- “Nurses are the cornerstone of the Nation’s complex health care system, representing the largest single component of the health care profession, with an estimated 2,500,000 registered nurses in the United States;
- “Nurses are currently serving the Nation admirably in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- “Nurses help inform and educate the public to improve the practice of all nurses and, more importantly, the health and safety of the patients they care for;
- “The Nation continues to face a nursing shortage unprecedented in its depth and duration, with a projection of over 1,000,000 new and replacement nurses needed by 2016;
- “The nationwide nursing shortage has caused dedicated nurses to work longer hours and care for more acutely ill patients; and
- “Nurses are an integral part of the health care delivery team and provide quality care, support, and education to patients and their families, conduct essential research, and serve as strong patient advocates.”

**Committee Action:** H.Res. 1086 was introduced on April 8, 2008, and referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. On April 9, 2008, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Health, which took no official action.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** The resolution does not authorize expenditures.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

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## **H.R. 4279—Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act of 2007 (*Conyers, D-MI*)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** H.R. 4279 would increase federal copyright and intellectual property law enforcement by easing requirements for bringing civil copyright suits, increasing criminal punishment for intellectual property crimes, and coordinating and expanding federal programs to enforce copyright infringement laws. A detailed summary of the bill's provisions follows below.

### ***Enhancements to Civil Intellectual Property Law***

- Stipulates that certificates of copyright registration are valid even in the event that the registration unintentionally contains inaccurate information.
- Requires a certificate of copyright registration to bring a copyright infringement case in a *civil* suit but not *criminal* cases. Under current law, a registration is necessary in all copyright infringement cases.
- Requires courts to destroy any records of the manufacture, sale, or receipt of things produced in violation of copyright laws. The bill also requires that courts issue protective orders regarding information about any things produced or sold in violation of copyright laws.
- Requires the courts to assess civil damages at least three times the profits made by intentionally violating copyright laws or intentionally providing materials to facilitate copyright infringement.
- Increases the maximum statutory damages awarded in copyright cases from \$500 to \$1,000 if the violation is found to be unintentional and from \$1 million to \$2 million if the violation is found to be intentional.
- Bans exporting goods that violate copyright laws. Under current law, only importing goods that violate copyright laws is banned.

### ***Criminal Infringement of a Copyright***

- Increases the severity of copyright infringement crimes, trafficking in counterfeit labels, and causing physical harm while trafficking counterfeit materials to felonies.
- Stipulates that any counterfeit material or items used to produce or traffic counterfeit material is subject to forfeiture to the federal government upon conviction of a civil or criminal counterfeit or copyright charge.
- Increases the maximum prison sentence for causing bodily harm while violating a copyright law from 10 years to 20 years. The bill would also allow a maximum sentence of life in prison for causing a death while violating a copyright law.

### *Office of the United States Intellectual Property Enforcement Representative*

- Establishes the Office of the United States Intellectual Property Enforcement Representative within the Executive Office of the President for the purpose of developing a joint strategic plan against counterfeiting and piracy. The Office would be headed by a representative appointed by the President and approved by the Senate.
- The representative would be given the title of ambassador and have the duty of negotiating on behalf of the U.S. in international intellectual property matters.
- The bill would establish an advisory committee within the representative's office to advise the representative and coordinate federal anti-counterfeiting efforts. The advisory committee would be required to draft the joint strategic plan to combat copyright violations and counterfeiting.
- Authorizes "such sums as may be necessary" for the Office of the United States Intellectual Property Enforcement Representative to carry out the requirements of this section.

### *International Enforcement and Coordination*

- Establishes at least 10 intellectual property rights attaches to serve U.S. embassies and other diplomatic missions overseas. The bill would require attaches to promote intellectual copyright enforcement internationally by coordinating U.S.-led efforts with other nations.
- Requires the United States Intellectual Property Enforcement Representative to coordinate and oversee the efforts of the attaches.
- Authorizes "such sums as may be necessary" for the Office of the United States Intellectual Property Enforcement Representative to carry out the requirements of this section.

### *Department of Justice Programs*

- Establishes the Intellectual Property Enforcement Division within the Office of the Deputy Attorney General in the Department of Justice.
- Transfers all Department of Justice functions that relate to intellectual property law enforcement to the Intellectual Property Enforcement Division.
- Authorizes the Department of Justice to give grants to local law enforcement for training, prevention, enforcement, and prosecution of intellectual property theft and infringement crimes.
- Authorizes the appropriation of funds for the Department of Justice to carry out the requirements of this section.

**Additional Information:** Congress has been increasingly concerned with intellectual property right laws and regulations with the advent of new file-sharing computer technology and the growth of international markets in nations without strong intellectual property laws, like Russia and China. H.R. 4279 is meant to reduce the theft of intellectual property both domestically and internationally by increasing penalties for copyright violations, easing barriers to civil suits concerning intellectual property, and encouraging greater coordination with foreign countries.

**Committee Action:** H.R. 4279 was introduced on December 5, 2007, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary’s Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property. On March 6, 2008, subcommittee hearings were held and the bill was forwarded to the full committee, as amended, by voice vote. On April 30, 2008, a full committee mark-up was held and the bill was reported, as amended, by voice vote.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** According to CBO, H.R. 4279 would authorize \$84 million in FY 2009 and \$435 million over the FY 2009 through FY 2013 period to fund expanded intellectual property law enforcement coordination and programs.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** Yes, it creates new programs and departments for the purpose of enforcing intellectual property laws.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** Text of Judiciary Committee Report 110-617 was not available at press time.

**Constitutional Authority:** Text of Judiciary Committee Report 110-617 was not available at press time.

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**H.R. 1512—To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for compensation to States incarcerating undocumented aliens charged with a felony or two or more misdemeanors (*Sanchez, D-CA*)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** H.R. 1512 would expand the federal government’s State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) to reimburse states for incarcerating undocumented, illegal aliens who are *charged* with either one felony or more than one misdemeanor. Under current law, a state may only receive SCAAP reimbursement grants for undocumented prisoners who are *convicted* of a felony or multiple misdemeanors. H.R. 1512 would also require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to produce an annual report that details the number of illegal aliens detained by the states annually and the cost of those detentions.

**Additional Information:** SCAAP is administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), which is a subdivision of the Department of Justice (DOJ). According to the BJA, SCAAP grants are awarded to state and local governments that incur law enforcement costs from incarcerating certain “undocumented criminal aliens.” Funds distributed through the program

are used in a myriad of ways, including salaries for corrections officers, overtime payments, construction, training, medical services, and pre-release programs. States and localities that incur costs associated with incarcerating undocumented aliens must submit annual grant applications to the BJA, detailing financial information regarding the correctional facility and the incarceration of undocumented criminals. The BJA then uses a formula to calculate a per diem SCAAP payment. In FY 2007, for instance, the BJA reports that the average SCAAP per diem was \$30.30 per inmate.

H.R. 1512 would expand the program to allow states and localities to apply for reimbursement grants for incarcerated undocumented criminals who are charged with a felony or more than one misdemeanor. Though H.R. 1512 would remove the requirement that undocumented aliens be convicted in order for states and localities to apply for SCAAP grants, the BJA's guidelines would still require undocumented prisoners to be incarcerated for at least four days to be considered for grants.

The White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in their Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) assessment, rate the SCAAP program as "not performing." OMB cites the facts that "reimbursements do not reduce the incidence of crime committed by criminal aliens" and "the program lacks goals and cannot measure such an outcome" as reasons for SCAAP's poor assessment. SCAAP is authorized at \$950 million annually through FY 2011.

**Committee Action:** H.R. 1512 was introduced on March 13, 2007, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law. On September 25, 2007, a subcommittee mark-up was held and the bill was forwarded to the full committee by voice vote. On October 24, 2007, the full committee held a mark-up and reported the bill, as amended, by voice vote.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** According to CBO, H.R. 1512 would cost less than \$1 million annually (subject to appropriation) for the GAO to carry out an annual study regarding the number of undocumented criminal aliens incarcerated by states and localities annually.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** A Committee Report citing compliance with rules regarding earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits was not available. Such a report is not required because the bill is being considered under a suspension of the rules.

**Constitutional Authority:** A Committee Report citing constitutional authority was not available.

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**H.R. 5690—To exempt the African National Congress from treatment as a terrorist organization (*Berman, D-CA*)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** H.R. 5690 would require the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the FBI, and the Director of National Intelligence to disregard membership in the African National Congress (ANC) or participation with anti-apartheid activity in South Africa between 1948 and 1990 when accepting South African visa applications. The bill would exempt ANC affiliation or membership as a determinate when considering South African visa applications.

H.R. 5690 would also stipulate that nothing in the bill could be construed to limit the authority of the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security to exclude organizations or individuals who have engaged in terrorist activities from visa consideration.

**Additional Information:** According to findings listed in the bill, the African National Congress (ANC) was established in the 1912 to campaign for the rights of blacks in South Africa. The ANC became the majority political party in South Africa in 1994 when its candidate, Nelson Mandela, won 60% of the presidential vote. In pre-apartheid South Africa, however, the ANC was banned and its leaders, including Mandela, were imprisoned in 1964. In the intervening years, the ANC led an open resistance to the apartheid South African government and was classified as a terrorist organization by numerous western nations, including the U.S. As members of a terrorist organization, ANC affiliates have faced extremely difficult circumstances while trying to obtain U.S. visas. Now recognized partners of the U.S., members of the ANC still have to obtain waivers from the Department of State to apply for U.S. visas. H.R. 5690 would exempt ANC membership from U.S. visa consideration.

**Committee Action:** H.R. 5690 was introduced on April 3, 2008, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law. On April 29, 2008, the subcommittee discharged the bill without taking any official action. The following day, a full committee mark-up was held and the bill was reported, as amended, by voice vote.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** According to CBO, H.R. 5690 would increase revenue by less than \$500,000 annually over the FY 2009 through FY 2018 period by allowing more visa application fees to be accepted from South African members of the ANC.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** A Committee Report citing compliance with rules regarding earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits was not available. Such a report is not required because the bill is being considered under a suspension of the rules.

**Constitutional Authority:** A Committee Report citing constitutional authority was not available.

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## **H.R. 5512—Coin Modernization and Taxpayer Savings Act of 2008** *(Space, D-OH)*

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** H.R. 5512 would require the Secretary of Treasury to prescribe the weight and composition of certain U.S. coins, including the dollar, half dollar, quarter, dime, nickel, and penny. Under current law, the weight and composition of these coins is prescribed statutorily.

H.R. 5512 would require the Secretary to take certain factors into consideration when determining the weight and composition of the aforementioned coins. Specifically, the Secretary would be required to consult with merchants who would be affected by the change. The Secretary would be required to consider the effect on vending machines and commercial coin processing equipment in order to ensure that any new coins would not interfere or interrupt existing coin acceptance equipment.

Finally, H.R. 5512 would require the secretary to produce a 1-cent coin comprised primarily of steel within 270 days of the enactment of this legislation. The bill would require that the steel 1-cent coin be treated to give the coin the same copper appearance as 1-cent coins produced currently.

**Additional Information:** In 2007, the Department of Treasury raised concerns that the increasing cost of materials used to produce U.S. coins had created a situation where certain coins cost more to produce than their actual face value was worth. Specifically, the U.S. Mint's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs wrote:

Rising metal prices, caused by high world demand for core metals, have driven the cost of metals up by 300% for copper and nickel and 450% for zinc since March of 2003. At metal prices prevailing in May 2007, it costs the United States Mint approximately 1.7 cents to make a penny and approximately 10 cents to make a nickel. Other denominations continue to be made at costs well below their face values, but metal cost is increasing for them as well. Arbitrage and extraction of coins from commerce (melting pennies and nickels for their metal value) is on set of problems. The second is the expected \$100 million "loss" to the taxpayers for FY 2007 resulting from the penny (-\$31 million) and the nickel (-\$68 million) metal costs—based on current production volumes. The losses will recur annually if not addressed.



Current statutes require pennies to be composed of 97.5% zinc and 2.5% copper plating. Nickels are comprised of 25% nickel and 75% copper. Quarters, dimes, and half dollars, are each comprised of 8.33% nickel and 91.67% copper—a copper core with nickel plating.

As a solution to this growing problem, the U.S. Mint and the Department of Treasury endorsed passage of H.R. 3330, the Coin Materials Modernization Act of 2007. The bill contained language similar to H.R. 5512—allowing the Secretary of Treasury to determine the weight and composition of coins. The bill did not, however, include a requirement that the Secretary begin producing 1-cent coins made primarily of steel. In a letter dated May 6, 2008, U.S. Mint Director Edmund Moy raised a series of objections to H.R. 5512. Most notably, Director Moy objected to the requirement that 1-cent coins be primarily comprised of steel within 270 days. According to the Director’s letter, “the 270-day mandate to make steel pennies will invariably require a ‘no-bid’ contract to the one domestic supplier capable of producing the volume of planchets required, thereby creating a monopoly for the coinage material, possibly driving costs up even further.”

**Committee Action:** H.R. 5512 was introduced on February 28, 2008, and referred to the Committee on Financial Services’ Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade, and Technology. On March 11, 2008, subcommittee hearings were held and no further official action was taken.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** A CBO score for H.R. 5512 was not available at press time. However, the U.S. Mint contends that current coin composition requirements cost the Mint nearly \$100 million annually, which would presumably be saved by the changes made by H.R. 5512.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** A Committee Report citing compliance with rules regarding earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits was not available. Such a report is not required because the bill is being considered under a suspension of the rules.

**Constitutional Authority:** A Committee Report citing constitutional authority was not available.

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## **H.R. 5614—Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle Ultra-High Relief Bullion Coin Act (Castle, R-DE)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** H.R. 5614 would require the Secretary of Treasury to mint and issue a commemorative coin that bears the design of the 1907 Augustus Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle ultra-high relief gold piece and has a face value of \$20. The bill would allow the Department of Treasury to mint as many coins as the Secretary determines are appropriate. H.R. 5614 would also allow the Secretary to choose to mint the first annual minting of the coin in 99% pure gold, but requires any additional minting to be made in pure palladium. The Secretary would be authorized to sell the coins for no less than the combined cost of designing and issuing the coins and the market value of the bullion used to produce the coin.

**Additional Information:** According to findings listed in the bill, the Augustus Saint-Gaudens \$20 Double Eagle coins, first designed in 1907, are considered by numismatists to be “the most beautiful coins ever produced.” The new \$20 version of the coin would be an exact replica of the original piece with the exception of the inscription “In God We Trust,” which would be added to the new coins. Palladium, which will be used to produce each coin minted after the first year, is a rare silver-white metal worth \$1,303 per troy ounce in 2007. Though the bill would require the Secretary of Treasury to spend federal money to obtain gold and palladium, commemorative coins often make money for the federal government from revenues generated by sales to collectors.

**Committee Action:** H.R. 5614 was introduced on March 13, 2008, and referred to the Committee on Financial Services, which took no official action.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** A CBO score for H.R. 5614 was not available at press time.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** A Committee Report citing compliance with rules regarding earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits was not available. Such a report is not required because the bill is being considered under a suspension of the rules.

**Constitutional Authority:** A Committee Report citing constitutional authority was not available.

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## **H. R. 2894—Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemorative Coin Act (*Ruppersberger, D-MD*)**

**Order of Business:** H. R. 2894 is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

**Summary:** H.R. 2894 instructs the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue \$1 silver coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner and the War of 1812.

The bill would require a coin design emblematic of the War of 1812, particularly the Battle for Fort McHenry that formed the basis for the “Star-Spangled Banner.” The bill authorizes the Secretary to issue the coins only during the calendar year beginning on January 1, 2012.

Under this act, all sales of coins issued shall include a surcharge of \$10 per coin. The bill would require all surcharges received by the Secretary from coin sales to be paid to the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission for the purpose of supporting bicentennial activities, and the preservation and improvement activities relating to the sites and structures relating to the War of 1812.

The bill lists the following findings:

- “During the War of 1812, on September 13, 1814, Francis Scott Key visited the British fleet in Chesapeake Bay to secure the release of Dr. William Beanes, who had been captured after the burning of Washington, DC;
- “The release was completed, but Key was held by the British overnight during the shelling of Fort McHenry, one of the forts defending Baltimore;
- “In the morning, Key peered through clearing smoke to see an enormous American flag flying proudly after a 25-hour British bombardment of Fort McHenry;
- “He was so delighted to see the flag still flying over the fort that he began a poem to commemorate the occasion, with a note that it should be sung to the popular British melody ‘To Anacreon in Heaven’;
- “In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson ordered that it be played at military and naval occasions;
- “In 1931, the ‘Star-Spangled Banner’ became our National Anthem.”

**Background Information:** According to CRS,

Since its inception, Congress has used commemorative legislation to express public gratitude for distinguished contributions; dramatize the virtues of individuals, groups, and causes; and perpetuate the remembrance of significant events. During the past two centuries, commemoratives have become an integral part of the American political tradition. They have been used to authorize the minting of commemorative coins and Congressional Gold Medals; fund monuments and memorials; create federal holidays; establish commissions to celebrate important anniversaries; and name public works, scholarships, endowments, fellowships, and historic sites.

**Committee Action:** H.R. 2894 was introduced June 28, 2007, and referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, which took no official action.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** No CBO score exists, but the legislation does not authorize any funds.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** Currently, no House Report exists.

**Constitutional Authority:** Currently, no House Report exists.

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## **H. R. 5872—Boy Scouts of America Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (Sessions, R-TX)**

**Order of Business:** H. R. 5872 is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

**Summary:** H.R. 5872 instructs the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue \$1 silver coins in commemoration of the Boy Scouts of America, on their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The bill would require a coin design emblematic of the 100 years of the largest youth organization in United States, the Boy Scouts of America.

Under this act, all sales of coins issued shall include a surcharge of \$10 per coin. The bill would requires all surcharges received by the Secretary from coin sales to be paid to the National Boy Scouts of America Foundation, and such funds will be made available to local councils in the form of grants for the extension of Scouting in hard to serve areas.

The bill lists the following findings:

- “The Boy Scouts of America will celebrate its centennial on February 8, 2010;
- “The Boy Scouts of America is the largest youth organization in the United States, with 3,000,000 youth members and 1,000,000 adult leaders in the traditional programs of Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturing;
- “Since 1910, more than 111,000,000 youth have participated in Scouting’s traditional programs;
- “The Boy Scouts of America was granted a Federal charter in 1916 by an Act of the 64th Congress which was signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson;

- “In the 110th Congress, 248 members of the House of Representative and the Senate have participated in Boy Scouts of America as Scouts or adult leaders;
- “The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is ‘to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law’;
- “Every day across our Nation, Scouts and their leaders pledge to live up the promise in the Scout Oath—‘On my honor I will do my best, To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight’—and the Scout Law, according to which a Scout is ‘Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent’;
- “In the past 4 years alone, Scouting youth and their leaders have volunteered more than 6,500,000 hours of service to their communities through more than 75,000 service projects, benefiting food banks, local schools, and civic organizations.”

**Committee Action:** H.R. 5872 was introduced April 22, 2008, and referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, which took no official action.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** No CBO score exists, but the legislation does not authorize any funds.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?:** Currently, no House Report exists.

**Constitutional Authority:** Currently, no House Report exists.

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## **H. R. 5937—To facilitate the preservation of certain affordable housing dwelling units (*Towns, D-NY*)**

**Order of Business:** H. R. 5937 is scheduled to be considered on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution.

**Summary:** H.R. 5937 would convert Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) contracts, at the request of the owner of the housing project, to a contract for project-based rental assistance under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

The bill specifies that at the request of the owner made no later than 90 days prior to a conversion, the Secretary may make amounts available and treat the contemplated resulting

contract as if such contract were eligible for initial renewal under section 524(a) of the Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act of 1997 (MAHRA).

The bill states that the resulting contract will be subject to section 524(a) of MAHRA (42 U.S.C. 1437f note); be considered for all purposes a contract that has been renewed under section 524(a) of MAHRA (42 U.S.C. 1437f note) for a term not to exceed 20 years; be subsequently renewable at the request of the owner, under any renewal option for which the project is eligible under MAHRA (42 U.S.C. 1437f note); contain provisions limiting distributions, as the Secretary determines appropriate, not to exceed 10 percent of the initial investment of the owner; be subject to the availability of sufficient amounts in appropriation Acts; and be subject to such other terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

**Background Information:** According to the House Committee on Financial Services Republican Staff,

This bill preserves the Starrett City housing development in New York as qualifying affordable housing. Starrett City in Brooklyn contains 5,881 affordable housing units for 14,000 residents. Its private owners have a contract with HUD for low-cost financing in return for keeping the project as affordable housing. The owners want to sell the property, which requires both federal and state approval to maintain its current subsidies.

For further background information, a [House Report](#) exists from a field hearing held in July, 2007 regarding this legislation.

**Committee Action:** H.R. 5937 was introduced May 1, 2008, and referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, which took no official action.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** No CBO score exists, but the legislation does not authorize any funds.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?:** Currently, no House Report exists.

**Constitutional Authority:** Currently, no House Report exists.

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