

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable R. James Nicholson  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

April 17, 2007

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We are writing to inquire about the status of the VA's implementation of P.L. 109-461, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act, that was signed into law on December 22, 2006. We both sponsored a provision included in that legislation that authorizes the use of veterans' housing loans for the purpose of purchasing stock or membership in a cooperative housing corporation.

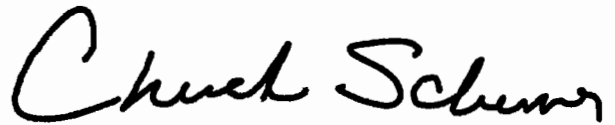
This is a vital issue for veterans in New York City and the surrounding areas because cooperative housing is one of the most prevalent types of housing in these markets. In fact, cooperative housing represents 80% of ownership housing in Manhattan and 30% of ownership housing in the outer boroughs. Overall, in the Greater New York City area there are over 600,000 units of cooperative housing that were previously unavailable to veterans taking advantage of the VA loan program. Even though other types of affordable housing including townhouses, condos and even mobile homes were already available for purchase under the VA loan program, co-ops were still prohibited. This legislation opens an important new opportunity for affordable housing to our nation's veterans and ensures that those who have fought for our country will not also have to fight for a place to live.

In the time since this provision became law, we have both been contacted by constituents who wish to purchase cooperative housing with their veterans' housing benefits and are unsure of how to do so. In some cases they have even been told that they are not allowed to use VA home loans for co-ops, despite the new legislation that explicitly authorizes them to do just that. We write to ask how VA personnel are being made aware of the new law and to ask that you provide us with information on how our constituents may initiate the purchase of a co-op using VA loan funds. Thank you in advance for your help, and we eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress



CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
U.S. Senator