

Bipartisan YIMBY Co-Chairs Moore & Auchincloss Unite to Tackle America's Housing Crisis

WASHINGTON, DC – As an entire generation faces barriers to homeownership, the co-Chairs of the bipartisan Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY) Caucus appeared last night before a dinner meeting of The Ripon Society and Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange to discuss the effort they are leading to address the housing shortage by revitalizing the nation's real estate development sector.

The co-chairs were House Republican Conference Vice Chair Blake Moore (R-UT-01) and Congressman Jake Auchincloss (D-MA-04).

Moore, who represents Utah's rapidly growing Wasatch Front, opened the discussion by underscoring the unique pressures facing his state.

"This is important," the Beehive State legislator stated. "It's one of those issues — housing issues — that is so easy to talk about, but then actually solving these problems is just incredibly difficult. ... When I first ran for Congress — and you would be doing a forum or a town hall or any debate — there was always a question around housing. And it's only intensified."

The Conference Vice Chair highlighted that because of the economic success and natural beauty

of his home state, Utah is faced with a unique set of challenges. But he shared, that he, along with his state and local legislators, have worked hard to come up with several solutions.

"We were going to enhance the percentage aspect of LIHTC for any properties that are within about 15 miles of a major military base," he said. "Our military folks go through so much and their housing is always inadequate. Builders would want to do it for the obvious reasons. Developers would love to have the type of tenant. They're going to have a commanding officer, they're going to be respectful individuals, and they're going to do right by where they live. It was a win-win."

And to create more necessary housing closer to Utah's many parks, Rep. Moore introduced the Lodge Act.

"Utah, as you know, is home to some of the most beautiful landscapes and national parks in the country. And there are a lot of adjacent towns and gateway cities — they're more like towns — that we need to have better cooperation from public and private partnerships to be able to develop and build housing that primarily would





Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT)

go towards park employees.”

Finally, the third-term Congressman discussed a tool that can lead to purchasing power – Employee Stock Ownership Portfolios.

“There is so much investment potential to be able to help individuals that are trying to buy a home for the first time and create a shared equity ownership plan that helps them get into their house – their only other option is to rent – and helps them start earning equity. And investors can also join in that – lenders have to have some skin in the game as well.”

Auchincloss, who previously served on the Newton City Council, echoed Moore’s call for innovation while highlighting the need to cut through layers of regulation that block new housing construction.

“Lowering the cost of housing is to me, one of the big three pressing ways to improve the economy for Americans,” Auchincloss shared in his opening remarks. “The other two were abundant energy and more science and R&D.

“Of those three, the easiest is housing because the private sector wants to build it. And they actually know where to build housing. The biggest thing that we have to do is just cut the unbelievable labyrinth of red tape that has encircled the construction.”

The Bay State legislator then shared that since its creation in the 1920s, restrictive zoning “has inhibited economic mobility and growth ever since,” citing rules around parking minimums, lot sizes, and separation of uses that prevent walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

“We actually don’t need command and control economics from the federal government to do this. The

big role that Washington can play is telling state and local governments to get out of the way, using our own carrots and sticks to tell localities you can’t zone housing to death, which is what a lot of these localities are doing.”

Auchincloss also tied the housing shortage to broader generational frustrations.

“We wonder why many of the younger generation are losing confidence in a market-led democracy. It’s because a market-led democracy is not making it easier for them to enter the middle class. What they’re seeing is that they’re getting suffocated, they’re having delayed establishment because they can’t get that first rung, by putting down a down payment and feeling like they’re fully adults and can enjoy a middle-class life.”

To close, Auchincloss offered a call to action.

“We in this country should build cities again. We used to build cities all the time as Americans. We built them in Boston, in Salt Lake City. We were good at it. It encapsulated our sense of enterprise and dynamism that has made America such an exceptional place.”

Founded in 1978, The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange is a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization committed to enhancing global understanding of important international issues. The Franklin Center brings together Members of the U.S. Congress and their international parliamentary counterparts as well as experts from the Diplomatic corps, foreign officials, senior private sector representatives, scholars, and other public policy experts. Through regular conferences and events where leading international opinion leaders share ideas, the Franklin Center promotes enlightened, balanced, and unbiased international policy discussion on major international issues.



Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA)