



**Remarks by Supervisor Mark Church  
Congress Builds America  
April 20, 2006  
523 DeLong Street, Daly City, CA 94014**

We are very fortunate to live in the Bay Area and we are all aware of the quality of life the Bay Area provides. But unfortunately, home ownership, a major element of that quality of life, has increasingly become attainable for only the very wealthiest in our community. The most recent statistics are staggering: According to Peninsula Habitat for Humanity, only 12% of San Mateo County residents can afford to purchase a median-priced house in the county, which is now an astonishing \$875,000. And according to United Way, 1 in 4 Bay Area families can't afford the basic necessities of life, such as housing, food, health and child care without assistance. The gap between income and expenses is widening and is becoming unsustainable.

Many Bay Area families live paycheck to paycheck and are on the verge of homelessness. And, as we all know, homelessness destroys hopes, families and lives. It diminishes our community. And when children are homeless, it weakens the foundation for our future.

Affordable housing is therefore absolutely critical to helping low income families break the cycle of poverty, and it gives them an equity stake in the community. Aside from the obvious financial benefits, home ownership builds confidence and creates a positive environment for children. It promotes a secure and successful life and provides stability.

As many of you know, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors recently approved a 10-year plan to end homelessness, called HOPE. Programs like HOPE and Congress Builds America create affordable housing and are essential to combatting the exorbitant housing prices in the Bay Area.

I am proud to be part of this effort and I commend the Peninsula Habitat for Humanity for this very worthwhile endeavor. Thank you.