

More Than 60 Cities Have Endorsed HBPA

by Nancy Spannaus

In the five months since economist Lyndon LaRouche called for the emergency enactment of a Homeowners and Bank Protection Act (HBPA), a total of 61 cities or towns (as of Feb. 1) have endorsed a version of the call for Congress to erect the necessary firewall of protection for chartered banks, and endangered homeowners. While a large number of these cities are in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, where a bipartisan bill (HR 418), introduced by State Rep. Harold James (D-Philadelphia) is pending in the legislature, momentum is now growing in other states as well. The reality of the ongoing financial breakdown crisis is creating the circumstances where local officials are beginning to demand that their Congressional representatives take action.

In addition to Pennsylvania, nine other states now have HBPA resolutions introduced, and awaiting action: Florida, Kentucky, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

Many of the city councils which are taking action, are in areas of the United States which are most devastated by the deindustrialization of recent years. Having lost high-paying jobs in industries that have now shut down, these cities are now being hit by a new shock wave of home foreclosures, which is leading to blighted and desperate communities.

Notable in this respect is the city of Akron, Ohio, whose city council passed Resolution No. 33 on Jan. 28. Akron is the fifth-largest city in the state, with a population of 214,000. As of the end of the third quarter of 2007, it was the 11th-worst city in the nation in terms of foreclosures, with 1 in every 76 households in foreclosure.

Akron's condition reflects its dramatic decline from being

a major transportation and manufacturing hub for Ohio, and the Midwest more generally. During the 20th Century, it became the tire and rubber manufacturing capital of the world, housing all the major U.S. companies, such as Goodyear, Firestone, etc. Then came the controlled disintegration of the 1980s and '90s, in which Akron lost over half of its rubber industry, and, like its neighbors Youngstown and Cleveland, turned into an industrial rubbleheap.

After unanimously passing Resolution 33, the Akron city council issued a press release, which appeared prominently

on its website, noting that the number of foreclosures in 2007 had risen 79% over the previous year. The number for Ohio overall climbed 88%.

In the release, council president Marco Sommerville is quoted saying: "This resolution says to our citizens that we hear their concerns for their livelihoods and maintaining the American dream, and we expect our federally elected officials to take action to protect that dream."

"This resolution is more than symbolic," Sommerville said. "It marks a historic step that a municipal body has elected to take which seeks real and meaningful action on a federal level to address local concerns that have major national implications."

The Akron resolution, like that of all the cities who have passed the call for the HBPA, has been forwarded to the Congressional representatives of the state.

Another deindustrialized area in which city council leaders are beginning to act against foreclosures with the HBPA, is the region around Chicago. Three former steel cities in northern Indiana—Gary, East Chicago, and Hammond—have recently passed resolutions demanding Congress enact the principles of the HBPA.

Also of note is the action being taken in the southeastern border region of Texas, which is suffering the effects of infrastructure collapse and economic depression. Four towns in this region—Brownsville, Cameron, Port Isabel, and San Benito—have recently passed calls for the HBPA.

It is the *entire* United States, its banking system and its people, of course, which is at stake in the hyperinflationary financial blowout. The Congress is ignoring the HBPA solution at its own political peril. Increasingly, the local officials are determined to let them know.

