



★★★★ United States Senator for Ohio ★★★★★
Sherrod Brown



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SEN. BROWN CALLS ON PRESIDENT TO EXPAND FORECLOSURE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO INCLUDE OHIO
Brown Points to Record Foreclosure Filings in 2009; Nearly 16 Percent of Ohio Mortgage Holders Are in or Near Foreclosure

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) today called on President Obama to expand his recently-announced foreclosure assistance program to Ohio. Brown pointed to Ohio's record number of foreclosure filings in 2009 and the staggering statistic that nearly 16 percent of Ohio mortgage holders are in or near foreclosure.

"I agree with President Obama that we should help those states hit hardest by unemployment and the foreclosure crisis," Brown said. "But if Ohio doesn't meet the criteria in the President's plan, the criteria are wrong. Decline in home prices should not be a deciding factor, as that seems to tilt relief to the states with the most speculation. I'm far more concerned about middle-class homeowners than people who gambled on unsustainable growth in real estate prices."

Last week, President Obama announced that he would use \$1.5 billion in leftover funds from the TARP program to help states with high unemployment in which the average home price for all homeowners has fallen more than 20 percent from peak. The plan will provide funding to State House Agencies to help struggling homeowners.

According to the most recent figures from the Mortgage Bankers Association, 15.7 percent of all mortgage holders in Ohio are either in foreclosure or thirty days past due. There were a record 89,053 foreclosure filings in the state last year, representing an increase of 3.8 percent over 2008. A county-by-county breakdown of foreclosure rates can be found below.

Ohio continues to rank forty-eighth among the fifty states and the District of Columbia in the number of homeowners who have been able to modify their mortgages for lower

payments through Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP). Only 14.8% of seriously delinquent loans have been modified through HAMP in Ohio, and only 8 percent of trial modifications have been converted into permanent modifications. Earlier this month, Brown wrote to the Obama Administration urging improvements to the HAMP program <http://brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press_releases/release/?id=F93CBCB8-2209-4E69-BDFC-9420EB2C0C2E> so that it helps more Ohio families avoid foreclosure by allowing them to refinance their mortgages and achieve lower monthly payments.

“Ohio foreclosures have almost tripled in the last decade,” Brown wrote in a letter today to President Obama. “Rather than reflecting the rapid boom and bust created by the housing bubble, foreclosures have increased steadily for fourteen consecutive years. I urge you to expand your program’s criteria or expeditiously create an alternative proposal to include states that have suffered prolonged losses due to persistent foreclosure increases. Ohio’s decade-long fight to keep working Americans in their homes should be a reason for inclusion, not exclusion, from any federal foreclosure prevention program.”

A full copy of Brown’s letter can be found below, along with county-by-county foreclosure rates.

February 23, 2010

*President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500*

Dear President Obama:

I write to you today regarding an issue of national importance and one of particular concern to my constituents in Ohio: the ongoing foreclosure crisis.

On Friday, your administration announced a new plan to address two of the most pressing issues related to mortgage foreclosures: rapidly declining home values and long-term levels of high unemployment. I commend your administration for recognizing these critical issues and for providing some of the hardest hit states with funding to address them. However, I am deeply concerned that the proposal would disregard states like Ohio that have borne the brunt of the crisis.

My state experienced a record 89,053 foreclosures last year, an increase of 3.8% over 2008. According to the most recent figures from the Mortgage Bankers Association, nearly one in six mortgage holders in Ohio are either in foreclosure or thirty days past due. Ohio continues to rank forty-eighth among the fifty states and the District of Columbia in Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) effectiveness: only 14.8% loans that are delinquent by 90 days or more have been modified. Making matters worse, only 12% of trial HAMP modifications have been converted into permanent modifications.

Ohio foreclosures have almost tripled in the last decade. Rather than reflecting the rapid boom and bust created by the housing bubble, foreclosures have increased steadily for fourteen consecutive years. I urge you to expand your program’s criteria or expeditiously create an alternative proposal to include states that have suffered prolonged losses due to persistent foreclosure increases. Ohio’s decade-long fight to keep working Americans in their homes should be a reason for inclusion, not exclusion, from any federal foreclosure prevention program.

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) has done an excellent job of addressing the various aspects of the foreclosure crisis by instituting mortgage rescue programs and working with local mortgage counselors. Additional federal funding would help creative state agencies like OHFA implement new local programs. More homeowners would be able to remain in their homes while continuing to make good on their obligations.

Thank you for considering my concerns, and I look forward to working with you to further help struggling homeowners.

Sincerely,

*Sherrod Brown
United States Senator*

Ohio Foreclosure Rates, 2008-09

County	2008	2009	Percent Increase
Adams	155	163	5.2%
Allen	996	690	-30.7%
Ashland	282	348	23.4%
Ashtabula	782	802	2.6%
Athens	169	192	13.6%
Auglaize	227	262	15.4%
Belmont	220	228	3.6%
Brown	371	385	3.8%
Butler	2,987	3,162	5.9%
Carroll	122	168	37.7%
Champaign	256	318	24.2%
Clark	1,124	1,104	-1.8%
Clermont	1,285	1,342	4.4%
Clinton	291	397	36.4%
Columbiana	636	702	10.4%
Coshocton	180	187	3.9%
Crawford	337	312	-7.4%
Cuyahoga	13,858	14,171	2.3%
Darke	310	311	0.3%
Defiance	183	198	8.2%
Delaware	909	1,003	10.3%
Erie	562	539	-4.1%
Fairfield	964	1,019	5.7%
Fayette	216	235	8.8%
Franklin	9,305	9,499	2.1%
Fulton	216	273	26.4%
Gallia	95	82	-13.7%
Geauga	435	508	16.8%
Greene	773	851	10.1%
Guernsey	210	221	5.2%
Hamilton	6,673	6,714	0.6%
Hancock	436	534	22.5%
Hardin	210	185	-11.9%
Harrison	81	70	-13.6%
Henry	146	183	25.3%
Highland	351	381	8.5%
Hocking	178	166	-6.7%
Holmes	109	103	-5.5%
Huron	396	423	6.8%
Jackson	198	220	11.1%
Jefferson	297	308	3.7%
Knox	405	453	11.9%
Lake	1,517	1,695	11.7%
Lawrence	260	260	0.0%
Licking	1,204	1,178	-2.2%
Logan	323	340	5.3%
Lorain	2,442	2,696	10.4%
Lucas	4,359	4,491	3.0%
Madison	198	273	37.9%
Mahoning	1,836	1,755	-4.4%

Marion	531	584	10.0%
Medina	961	1,155	20.2%
Meigs	75	74	-1.3%
Mercer	142	154	8.5%
Miami	590	741	25.6%
Monroe	38	33	-13.2%
Montgomery	5,194	4,703	-9.5%
Morgan	37	85	129.7%
Morrow	261	242	-7.3%
Muskingum	563	450	-20.1%
Noble	38	32	-15.8%
Ottawa	273	262	-4.0%
Paulding	126	151	19.8%
Perry	217	234	7.8%
Pickaway	318	339	6.6%
Pike	129	104	-19.4%
Portage	874	935	7.0%
Preble	374	370	-1.1%
Putnam	104	100	-3.8%
Richland	862	903	4.8%
Ross	416	518	24.5%
Sandusky	321	408	27.1%
Scioto	304	324	6.6%
Seneca	316	331	4.7%
Shelby	250	303	21.2%
Stark	3,017	2,700	-10.5%
Summit	4,113	4,633	12.6%
Trumbull	1,481	1,605	8.4%
Tuscarawas	389	453	16.5%
Union	320	338	5.6%
Van Wert	201	207	3.0%
Vinton	43	65	51.2%
Warren	1,306	1,498	14.7%
Washington	173	201	16.2%
Wayne	462	588	27.3%
Williams	199	273	37.2%
Wood	582	750	28.9%
Wyandot	98	107	9.2%
Statewide	85,773	89,053	3.8%

Source: Supreme Court of Ohio

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