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Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Washington DC 20429

Office of Legislative Affairs

**OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENCE ASSIGNMENT**

LA 11-1036

ASSIGNED TO:
COMMENTS

DATE: 07/22/2011

DUE DATE: 07/22/2011

CORRESPONDENT: HONORABLE FORTENBERRY, JEFF
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

CONGRESSMAN FORTENBERRY EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER THE PROPOSED
QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE RULE.

THE ATTACHED INQUIRY HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO COMMENTS FOR PREPARATION OF
A **DRAFT RESPONSE FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR, OLA**. THE DRAFT
RESPONSE SHOULD BE DELIVERED TO THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENCE UNIT (MB 6082) NO LATER THAN COB **07/22/2011**.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS RELATING TO THIS ASSIGNMENT, PLEASE REFER TO
DIRECTIVE 1211.2 OR CONTACT THE CORRESPONDENCE UNIT OF THE OFFICE OF
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AT 898-7055.

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JEFF FORTENBERRY
1ST DISTRICT, NEBRASKA

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
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Congress of the United States **EDIC**
House of Representatives JUL 22 2011

July 15, 2011

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Secretary
United States Department of
Housing & Urban Development
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Honorable Ben S. Bernanke
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Board of Governors of the
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Honorable Sheila C. Bair
Chairman
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Honorable Mary L. Schapiro
Chairman
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Dear Madam Chairman:

I am writing concerning your notice of proposed rulemaking on the regulations to implement Section 941 of the Dodd-Frank Act which includes defining a Qualified Residential Mortgage (QRM) that will be exempt from the Act's risk retention requirements. I strongly urge you in this process to consider lower down payment loans that have mortgage insurance (MI) as constituting a QRM.

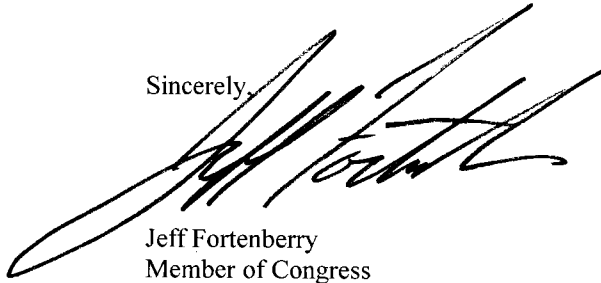
Section 941 of the Dodd-Frank Act specifically names "mortgage guarantee insurance" as one of the factors to be included in the QRM definition. The law recognizes that private capital does not exclusively come from a lender or an investor; it can be provided by a private mortgage insurer. The QRM regulations should reflect this important reality, which was Congress' intent in clarifying this point in the Act. As we seek to ensure sustainable home ownership supported by the private sector, it should not go unnoticed that loans with private mortgage insurance default less often than uninsured loans. Mortgage insurers provide additional scrutiny on a loan application supplementing the lender's review. In addition, mortgage insurers have well-established procedures that have been shown to mitigate and cure loan deficiencies. These safeguards protect lenders and investors while keeping families in their homes. This is important to consider as we seek ways to create sustainable home ownership opportunities for Americans through the private sector with less reliance on government-supported mortgage finance products.

The proposal to require a minimum 20 percent down payment requirement under the QRM definition would reduce the availability of affordable mortgage capital for otherwise qualified consumers. In fact, in 2009, when underwriting standards had already been significantly tightened, the majority of homes were purchased with less than 20 percent down payments. An unnecessarily strict QRM definition would particularly harm first-time and minority homebuyers. Creditworthy first-time homebuyers would be priced out of the market, as evidenced by a survey by the National Association of Realtors that found in 2010, 86 percent of first-time homebuyers made down payments below 20 percent. The resultant reduction in demand for housing, due to an overly burdensome government dictate, would only add to the challenges the housing market faces, and could threaten a full-fledged economic recovery from years to come.

Other overly proscriptive elements of the proposal regarding credit history are best left in the context of establishing broad underwriting standards and principles. I am concerned, for example, that the proposed regulation establishes overly-narrow debt-to-income guidelines last seen more than a generation ago that would further reduce access to credit for a broad range of Americans. Furthermore, this could have the unintended consequence of pushing borrowers to Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insured loans. The FHA is already playing too large a role in the mortgage market and we should not institute policies that could exacerbate the problem.

I urge you to revise the proposed rule to reflect the intent of Congress by including prudently underwritten privately issued loans within the QRM definition. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Fortenberry". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and "F".

Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress