Last year’s midterm elections changed the balance of power in Washington. The House of Representatives now has a Democratic majority, which means for the first time in two years, we no longer have one party controlling the policy agenda.

This creates opportunities for us to move our policy priorities forward in 2019. Whether it’s helping people acquire affordable home mortgages, making sure houses are built safely and soundly, or upholding consumer protections and fair lending standards, it is important to advocate for what your communities deserve.

To strengthen your advocacy, Prosperity Now has created the Affordable Homeownership Campaign. Join the campaign to receive important developments in housing policy—like bills you should support or oppose—and actionable steps to advocate for policies that benefit you.

Below is our policy agenda for 2019. While it’s not an exhaustive list, these are the issue areas where your advocacy would have the biggest impact.

**Affordable Housing Policy Priorities**

**Help families get more affordable and safe mortgages by improving credit reporting and scoring.** Credit scores play a critical role in determining the quality of mortgages one can access, and someone with a poor score has few good choices. The Credit Access and Inclusion Act (H.R. 435 and S. 3040) would help people improve their scores—or get a score for the first time—by promoting the inclusion of additional, common payments (like rents, utilities and phone bills) in credit reporting. Although they are often not considered, studies suggest that reporting this data can boost credit scores.

**Defend fair housing.** Anti-discrimination laws in housing are under threat. Implementation of the Fair Housing Act’s requirement to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH) has been delayed, and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) is being reconsidered. These laws reduce housing segregation, promote fair lending and increase access to safe and affordable loan products.

**Help keep consumer protections strong.** Protections against predatory lending risk being undermined. Particularly harmful are efforts to weaken the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), the agency responsible for regulations such as the Ability-to-Repay (ATR) rule. This makes sure that lenders determine whether a consumer can afford to pay a mortgage before offering it to them. The CFPB needs to be protected, as do other important consumer safety regulations.
Ensure reforms to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac support affordable housing and underserved markets. It is likely the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) will take steps to bring Fannie and Freddie out of conservatorship in the near term. When this happens, we will need to make sure any changes preserve affordable housing goals as well as the duty to serve underserved markets.

Manufactured Housing Policy Priorities

Require strong leadership at the Office of Manufactured Housing (OMH). The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ousted two OMH officials who favored appropriate and consumer-focused regulation of the manufactured housing industry. OMH needs leadership that will implement and advance solid construction and safety standards for manufactured homes.

Support regulations that ensure the safety and quality of manufactured homes. Not long after removing agency officials, HUD decided to formally examine the agency’s manufactured housing regulations. Secretary Ben Carson explicitly stated that HUD is “trying to find a way to get the paper shredder out and get rid of as many [regulations] that are not necessary as we possibly can.” For the sake of upholding the soundness and integrity of manufactured homes, it is imperative that HUD review, update and improve these regulations, not simply “get rid” of them.

Help fund the construction of manufactured homes. In 2019, we will advance the proposed HUD Manufactured Housing Modernization Act of 2017 (H.R. 3793), a bill that would list manufactured homes as an affordable housing option in the guidance used to draft proposals for federal funding (e.g. Community Development Block Grants). This lets communities know that they can use manufactured homes to meet their housing needs and receive funding to help with construction or repair.

Promote the preservation of manufactured housing communities. We also support the Manufactured Housing Community Sustainability Act (H.R. 3296/S. 1581), a bill that would provide an incentive for property owners to sell their land to a manufactured housing community. A tax credit worth 75% of the gain from the sale of the property would be provided, and the property must be used as a community for at least 50 years. There is interest in Congress to revisit the bill next year.

Continue to support Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac’s Duty to Serve (DTS) underserved markets. Fannie and Freddie have an obligation to expand their footprint and increase their impact in markets that are traditionally underserved, which includes manufactured housing. They are in Year One of their plans. We need to continue to actively engage with Fannie and Freddie and support a robust and successful DTS program.
Join the Campaign to Preserve Affordable Homeownership!

Name ___________________________________________

Email ____________________________________

Organization __________________________________________

Title ______________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________

State __________________

Zip Code ________________

Interested in joining our other advocacy campaigns?

☐ Consumer Protections

☐ Financial Security

☐ Right-Side Up Tax Reform

Or Sign Up at

www.prosperitynow.org/take-action