

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Cosponsor the Private Property Rights Protection and Government Accountability Act

June 6, 2008

Dear Colleague,

In 2005, the Supreme Court broadened the government's capacity to snatch your home, your farm or your business out from under you. In the infamous *Kelo v. City of New London* decision, the Court decided to expand the authority of state and local governments to seize and transfer private property to developers through the use of eminent domain authority. This ruling resulted in the interpretation of eminent domain authority so broadly that it is now almost limitless. The negative effects of this far reaching Supreme Court decision places millions of private property owners nationwide at risk.

States are trying to correct this injustice and have enacted restrictions on the use of eminent domain, with varied effectiveness. Not surprisingly, the abusive use of eminent domain has continued.

That is why we are introducing the **Private Property Rights Protection and Government Accountability Act of 2008**. This legislation will restrict certain federal economic development funds for 10 years to any state in which eminent domain is used to take private property for a private purpose. It will also allow private property owners the legal recourse they deserve to fight private property takings by state and local governments that are used for private purposes.

Previously, the U.S. Constitution specifically limited government taking of private property through a relatively narrow exception for public use. This has historically meant roads, schools, firehouses, etc. In the *Kelo* decision, the Supreme Court gave permission for any taking that transfers a parcel of private property not to the city or county, but to another private owner when local and state bureaucrats decide that the transfer suits any "public purpose."

No family, business operator or place of worship is safe if the government decides that their property doesn't measure up, and that a "public purpose" would be better served if it were torn down and replaced by something bigger, glitzier and more taxable. Congress has yet to pass a law to restore people's property rights in the wake of the *Kelo* decision. We need to ensure the federal government does not sit on its hands and, in doing nothing, condone the abuse of eminent domain by rewarding states and localities with taxpayer funds for economic development.

We hope you will join us in protecting the property rights of our citizens and support this legislation. To add your name as a cosponsor, please contact Jon Oehmen in Rep. John Sullivan's office at (202) 225-2211.

Sincerely,


John Sullivan
Member of Congress


Joe Barton
Member of Congress