

Special Committee on Aging

***Elderly Housing: Analysis of Bureaucratic Problems in the
Administration of HUD Section 202 Housing Program***

June 17, 2003

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN BREAUX

I would first like to thank Chairman Craig for holding this vital hearing on housing for the elderly. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the witnesses who have come before us to testify today. Your testimony will be of great value as the Committee works to address some of the critical challenges that exist in providing housing to our nation's seniors.

The need for affordable housing for the elderly is great. It has been estimated that nearly 3.3 million elderly households have what is defined as "very low incomes." To address this need, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program was developed. This program serves as a resource for developing housing for low income elderly households and is the only federal program devoted exclusively to providing this type of housing. Due to the population it serves and its very important mission, it is imperative that HUD's Section 202 program run efficiently and effectively.

Today we will hear from witnesses who will discuss some of the problems

associated with applying for and receiving funding to develop Section 202 housing projects. We will also hear from the General Accounting Office, which today released a report today Chairman Craig and I requested. Unfortunately, it appears that the Section 202 housing program is currently neither efficient nor effective. I hope that this hearing is the first step towards fixing these problems. Those seniors who have the greatest needs, should not be left waiting for an affordable place to live.

Thank you once again Mr. Chairman for holding this important hearing. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.