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More families can't afford housing in N.J.

I am writing concerning the affordability of housing in New Jersey.

Homeowners in New Jersey have benefited from the real estate boom, as skyrocketing home values have provided them with rising home equity. However, the flipside to this equation is that more and more families cannot find affordable housing in New Jersey, which is now the third most expensive state to live in.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that in New Jersey the average household requires a yearly salary of \$42,000 to rent a "fair market" apartment. But the state Department of Labor reports that over a third of New Jersey workers earn less than \$25,000 a year. Most new jobs created here in the next 10 years will pay near or under that amount.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration has not only turned a blind eye to this problem, but has actually continued to cut Section 8 funding for affordable housing on a yearly basis. The federal government's cuts have offset New Jersey's attempts to address the need for affordable housing.

New Jersey is one of the few states that recognizes affordable housing as a constitutional right. Unfortunately, the need for affordable housing is not being met. New Jersey must address this problem so that the less fortunate are not left behind by our state's rising property values.

Concerned citizens can start by contacting their representatives in Congress and asking them to oppose continued cuts in Section 8 funding.

Eddie Konczal

Monroe Township
