

**THIRTIETH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Miami, Florida
October 18, 19, 20, 21, 1948**

**Resolution No. 179: National Association of Real Estate Boards' Attitude on Housing
Shortage**

Origin: Pennsylvania

Submitted By: Convention Committee on Housing

WHEREAS, "Headlines," a weekly publication of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, in its issue of July 12, 1948, carried the following comments described as being typical of the comments received on the housing outlook:

"San Francisco: 'Shortage is not as acute as one year ago. Rentals still scarce, but can be found.' "Louisville: '1948 will see end of major housing shortage.' "Memphis: 'If there is no interruption in the present rate of construction, we should have within the next 20 months a comparatively normal balance between supply and demand in residential units for sale and for rent unless unforeseen immigration takes place.' "Madison: 'By the end of 1948 supply and demand of apartments will be about balanced. Have already reached such a balance for single-family-owned homes.' "Manchester, Conn.: 'Housing being built for sale should reach pretty near normal supply this year, but until something is done to provide sufficient incentive to investors, we can expect a shortage of rental housing for an extended period' "; and

WHEREAS, The 80th Congress in July, 1947, adopted Concurrent Resolution No. 104 which created a Joint Congressional Committee on Housing with instructions to the committee to conduct a thorough study and investigation of the entire field of housing; and

WHEREAS, On March 15, 1948, a final majority report of the Joint Committee on Housing was submitted to Congress; and

WHEREAS, The committee found that in the spring of 1947 there were 2,800,000 families living doubled-up with other families and an additional 500,000 families living in temporary housing, trailers, rooming houses and other makeshift accommodations; and

WHEREAS, The committee subsequently stated: "Moreover, during the past year, even with the sharp expansion of home building, the net number of new families formed greatly exceeded the number of new homes provided"; and

WHEREAS, This typical misinformation issued by the National Association of Real Estate Boards tends to confuse the issues involved in the housing shortage; and

WHEREAS, The opposition of the officers and directors of the National Association of Real Estate Boards is not shared by the rank and file of members of the National Association of Real Estate Boards who are fully aware of the acute shortage of housing, particularly rental housing, for veterans of low income; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Miami, Florida, October 18, 19, 20, 21, 1948, That The American Legion officially notify the National Association of Real Estate Boards of its interest in providing public housing for veterans of low income who otherwise cannot secure decent housing under the "hand-me-

down” principles of housing adopted by the officers and directors of the National Association of Real Estate Boards; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion call to the attention of the National Association of Real Estate Boards the following quotation from the majority report of the Joint Congressional Committee on Housing:

“The wide disparity between the rents which low-income families can pay and the prices at which private enterprise can supply decent housing, either new or second-hand, is so great that public aid must be made available if these families are to be decently housed. The committee has been impressed by the report of Senator Tobey—Effects of Taxation Upon Housing—in which he discussed proposals to reduce the monthly cost of housing. Thirteen different proposals currently advocated were carefully studied as to the rents which could be achieved under them. Almost all of these involved subsidy, many of them through tax exemption or tax abatement. The effect of each of these proposals in reducing rents was carefully studied on the basis of a typical project with identical capital cost and identical operating expense, and the report concludes:

“Only the low-rent public housing formula involving annual Federal subsidies and local tax exemption would reduce rents sufficiently to meet the requirements of the average family in the lowest income third.

“As a result of its investigation the committee believes that the present low-rent housing program under the United States Housing Act of 1937 provides a sound and workable method for the administration of the subsidies necessary for the provision of housing for families of low income. This is substantiated by evidence contained in Senator Wagner’s report, which shows that all of the mayors with low rent public housing in their cities who replied indicated that it had been built and operated efficiently, and 51 out of 55 indicated that it has served low-income families.”