

**Prepared Statement of Robert M. Couch**

**Nominee to be President of the Government National Mortgage  
Association (Ginnie Mae),  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

**Hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Banking,  
Housing and Urban Affairs**

**United States Senate**



**March 14, 2006**

Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Sarbanes, and distinguished members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I also want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the kind words of introduction. And thank you to all of the members of the Committee and their staffs who have met with me over the last month. Those meetings have helped me gain important insights into the position for which I have been nominated.

My wife Anne, who is here today, and I are extremely fortunate. We own the home in which we have lived for the past 18 years. Not everyone in this great country can say that. When we initially tried to borrow money to buy our first home, we were turned down. Luckily, we had a supportive family that was willing to back us and we became homeowners. Other aspiring homeowners may not be as blessed. The job for which I have been nominated, the Presidency of Ginnie Mae, has the potential to help these families achieve the dream of owning their very own home.

I believe deeply in the power of homeownership, as do President Bush and Secretary Jackson. When a family owns the home in which it lives it has a stake in the community, which in turn leads to more community involvement and more community investment. Homeownership is also perhaps the best vehicle we have for building personal wealth.

The mission of Ginnie Mae is to “expand access to affordable housing in America by linking the global capital markets to the nation’s housing markets.” We have seen homeownership grow in recent years, with a record level of more than 69 percent in 2005. And we’ve seen the gap between minority and non-minority homeownership levels shrink. Still, there is plenty of room left for improvement. Working with its partners at HUD, the Veterans Administration and USDA’s Rural Housing program, Ginnie Mae continues to play a vital role in keeping America’s homeownership rate going in the right direction. If confirmed, I am committed to do all I can to help Ginnie Mae fulfill this important mission.

Shortly after taking office, President Bush challenged the nation to create 5.5 million minority homeowners by the end of the decade. Since the announcement of that goal, 2.4 million minority families have joined the ranks of homeowners. To fully realize the President’s goal, the secondary mortgage markets, and particularly the markets for mortgages secured by

homes of low-to-moderate income families, must continue to operate efficiently. Ginnie Mae has been an indispensable element of the housing finance sector since its inception in 1968 and Ginnie must continue to play an active role in the future.

I recognize that not everyone in this country is able to own a home. But everyone should have access to affordable housing. While most of Ginnie Mae's efforts are focused on securitization of single-family mortgages, a growing area is the securitization of FHA multi-family loans. If confirmed, I will continue to look for creative ways to improve the market for multi-family securities.

Mr. Chairman, I am very appreciative of the trust that the President and Secretary Jackson have placed in me by nominating me for the post of Ginnie Mae President. I am hopeful that the Banking Committee and ultimately the full Senate will look favorably on my nomination.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.