

- Les AuCoin

EXTENSION OF REMARKS
BY CONGRESSMAN LES AuCOIN
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Mr. Speaker: The concerned County Commissioners of Polk County, Oregon, have alerted me that HUD Secretary Pierce has requested an exemption of all HUD programs from Circular A-95 of the Office of Management and Budget. I have determined that OMB is seriously considering adoption of this request.

The A-95 Circular Review procedure provides state and local officials the opportunity to participate in the review of proposed federal grants and projects. Through this intergovernmental communications process, A-95 has proven to be a valuable tool for assessing local needs, coordinating resources, and preventing waste or duplication of government services. I am amazed that an administration which trumpets the philosophy of bringing government decisions "closer to local people" is now attempting to slam the door on local government.

At a time when greater responsibility is being placed upon state and local governments, information of the sort produced by the A-95 process is crucial. At a time when all appropriations -- including those for housing assistance programs -- are minimal, it is more necessary than ever to ensure that funds are utilized in the most effective way.

An old carpenter once told me: "Never tear down a wall until you know why it was built in the first place." In its zeal to cut and eliminate, the Administration may be about to make this mistake. A-95 is not some ineffective, inefficient bit of bureaucratic redtape. I urge the Administration to preserve the review, and to differentiate between rules which truly improve the quality of programs, and those which are indeed ineffective and burdensome.