Talking Points on Key Housing Issues

November 2026

The following talking points help tell the residential construction industry story to the media, policymakers, NAHB members, local/civic organizations and consumers.

Key NAHB Housing Issues

1. **NAHB Well-Positioned to Advance Housing Priorities.** With Democrats winning control of the House and Senate in the Nov. 3 midterms, NAHB is well-positioned to work with the new Congress on bipartisan proposals to make housing more affordable and attainable.

2. **NAHB Acts on Immigration Enforcement Disruptions.** Members are reporting that increased immigration enforcement and jobsite raids are heightening worker fears and further straining the construction labor pool.

3. **U.S. Cuts Duties on Canadian Lumber.** The U.S. Commerce Department has lowered duties on Canadian lumber but the overall lumber tariffs remain relatively high at 34.75%.

4. **Rising Costs Slow the Housing Market.** High long-term interest rates, renewed inflation pressure and rising labor and construction costs continue to weigh on the housing market.

5. **Housing Market Overview**: September saw declines in single-family starts, multifamily production and existing home sales, but new home sales increased. October builder confidence fell three points to 29, a 14-year low.

NAHB Poised to Advance Housing Priorities

- With the Democrats retaking the House and the Senate, what does this mean for home building and housing?

- Regardless of the final seat counts, NAHB is well-positioned to work with the new Democratic-controlled Congress on bipartisan proposals to make housing more affordable and attainable.

- Housing affordability was a top concern for voters in exit polls and will continue to be a priority in Washington after the election.

- Democrats are expected to focus on increased funding for affordable housing programs, a greater emphasis on workforce training, and limits on President Trump's tariff and immigration policies that have impacted new construction.

- At the same time, the Trump administration is expected to continue to pursue an agenda of deregulation that will help spur new housing supply.

NAHB Keeps Housing a Top National Priority

- NAHB has worked tirelessly to keep housing atop the political agenda and housing has long drawn bipartisan support. Notably, the landmark 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act passed both chambers of Congress this summer with overwhelming backing from both parties.

- The package will help increase the nation's housing supply by easing regulatory barriers and encouraging local zoning and land-use reforms to address restrictions on home building.

- Visit nahb.org/road for more details on the new housing law, including talking points, an executive summary of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, a podcast overview of the bill and additional resources.

- But the ROAD to Housing Act is just a start. In the "lame duck" session following the election, Congress is expected to begin debate on the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (BAAJA).

- Championed by a bipartisan group of senators (Sens. Shelley Morre Capito (R-W.Va.), Mike Lee (R-Utah), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), this major permitting reform bill will help builders and developers obtain faster, cheaper federal permits – meaning lower land development costs and more affordable lots.

- Tell your members of Congress **you support BAAJA.** Your voice can help pass the bill this year. Call your senators and representative at 202-224-3121 and urge them to pass BAAJA to ease regulatory burdens, lower lot prices and expand housing supply.

NAHB Wields Influence in Washington

- And with a national housing shortfall of roughly 1.2 million households, some lawmakers are already discussing a "ROAD 2.0" bill to curb rising costs and expand home building, underscoring housing's place on the political agenda.

- As a nonpartisan organization, NAHB has built strong working relationships with Democrats and Republicans, earning a seat at the table to advance our housing priorities:

    - Ease regulatory burdens
    - Curb costly federal mandates and streamline permitting
    - Expand housing supply

    - Support workforce development
    - Help reduce material cost pressures through tariff relief and by supporting reliable building material supply chains

- NAHB and our Federation stand ready to work with the new Congress, the Trump administration and state and local officials on bipartisan solutions to rein in rising costs and help builders deliver more homes and apartments.

Nov. 9: Interactive Webinar on What the Elections Mean for Housing

- NAHB will host a members-only webinar on Nov. 9 at 2 p.m. ET with in-depth election updates and insights on what the midterms mean for housing.

- A panel of NAHB advocacy staff experts will discuss election results at all levels, explain their policy implications and answer selected participant questions. Register now. (Login required.)

NAHB Acts on Immigration Enforcement Disruptions

- Amid a severe labor shortage, NAHB members in some markets say increased immigration enforcement and jobsite raids are deepening worker fears and straining the construction workforce.

- In parts of the country, stepped up enforcement is deterring legally authorized workers from jobsites, delaying construction and raising costs amid a 1.2 million-home shortage.

- Immigrants comprise more than one-quarter of the construction workforce and are essential because the domestic labor pipeline cannot meet demand.

- Government data show construction is short about 300,000 workers. A June 2025 Home Builders Institute study found that the shortage delays projects and raises labor costs and home prices.

- On average, shortages add two months to construction, reduce annual output by 19,000 homes and cost builders and consumers $10 billion a year.

NAHB Acts on Several Fronts

- NAHB supports a multifaceted solution:

    - Secure the border without harming American businesses through overly aggressive or unlawful enforcement;
    - Create legal pathways for eligible workers to remain in the U.S.; and
    - Attract more Americans to skilled-trade careers.

- NAHB has raised concerns with senior Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials about inconsistent, overly aggressive enforcement targeting residential construction workers.

- NAHB urges Congress to pass the DIGNITY Act (H.R. 4393), which would strengthen border security and provide an earned path to permanent work authorization for qualifying undocumented workers who meet rigorous requirements.

- NAHB's legal team created When ICE Comes Calling, a guide outlining best practices for business owners during an ICE raid. It is also available in Spanish.

- For more resources on ICE raids and immigration enforcement, visit nahb.org and search "enforcement" in the search box at the top of the page.

Promoting Careers in the Skilled Trades

- Alongside immigration reform, NAHB is working to attract more Americans to skilled trade careers.

- NAHB urges policymakers at all levels to expand apprenticeships and trade education. We are also calling on Congress to pass the CONSTRUCTS Act (H.R. 1055/S. 189), bipartisan legislation preparing adults for construction careers.

- NAHB and HBI use training, education and advocacy to expand the skilled workforce.

- As HBI graduates enter the workforce, they help fill critical labor gaps – strengthening the residential construction industry and contributing to lower housing costs across the country.

- NAHB also supports:

    - Preserving legal workforce pathways, including the H-2B program, when qualified domestic workers are unavailable.

    - Limiting employers' verification responsibilities to their direct employees – not workers employed by subcontractors.

U.S. Cuts Duties on Canadian Lumber

- The U.S. Department of Commerce lowered antidumping and countervailing duties on Canadian softwood lumber imports from about 35.16% to 24.75%.

- However, total duties on lumber imports are 34.75% because the Trump administration imposed a separate 10% tariff on timber and softwood lumber after a Section 232 national security investigation.

- NAHB has long opposed lumber and other building material tariffs because they heighten market uncertainty, strain supply chains and increase construction costs.

- As the president continues to advance his tariff agenda, NAHB is urging the administration to exempt building materials in light of the ongoing housing affordability crisis.

- Largely because of NAHB's advocacy, lawmakers in both chambers introduced the Housing Tariff Exclusion Act, which would exempt many home building materials from current and future Trump administration tariffs.

Rising Costs Slow the Housing Market

- High long-term interest rates, renewed inflation pressure and rising labor and construction costs continue to weigh on the housing market.
- These increases, coupled with diesel prices that have more than doubled over the year, are squeezing builder margins and raising new-home construction costs.
- These pressures helped push builder confidence to a 14-year low in October, while a record-high 43% of builders reported price cuts in our latest survey.
- More than one-third also reported that local immigration enforcement was delaying construction or deterring workers from job sites.
- Demand remains, but mortgage rates above 7%, weakening confidence, labor constraints and rapidly rising construction costs increasingly hold it back.
- With single-family construction already declining in 2026, these conditions deepen concerns about 2027.
- The outlook for interest rates and housing demand will depend largely on developments in the Iran war, which could intensify after the midterm elections.

Housing Market Snapshot

Latest Data: September 2026

Housing Starts	Current Value	Monthly Change	Yearly Change
Single-family:	859,000 AR	-4.6%	2.6%
Multifamily:	362,000 AR	-6.7%	-24.9%
Median SF Home Price			
New:	$399,500	3.2%	-3.9%
Existing:	$423,000	-0.1%	1.2%
SF Home Sales			
New:	676,000 AR	-0.6%	-5.3%
Existing:	3.64 million AR	2.0%	-1.9%

All data is seasonally-adjusted, AR = Annual Rate, SF = Single-Family
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Association of Realtors, tabulated by NAHB

NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index – The index gauges builder confidence in the new single-family home market. It fell three points from September to 29 in October, a 14-year low. Readings below 50 mean more builders rate sales conditions as poor than good.

NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz's analysis: "Supply constraints and steep affordability hurdles continue to squeeze the housing market. Demand persists, but higher mortgage rates, elevated construction costs and weaker consumer confidence are keeping more buyers on the sidelines. Over the past month, more than one-third of builders nationwide reported immigration enforcement in their markets, delaying construction and discouraging legal workers from reporting to work. Builder confidence has fallen to a 14-year low as a result. Long-term affordability hinges on a sustained rise in home building, but near-term construction will depend on mortgage rates, financing conditions and progress on easing regulatory barriers."