



# Talking Points on Key Housing Issues

April 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. **Key Wins Early in 2026.** NAHB has scored important victories to start the year, including a legal win that vacates HUD's 2021 IECC mandate, passage of the Housing for the 21st Century Act, and President Trump's executive orders on housing to remove regulatory barriers and provide better access to mortgage credit.
2. **A Strong Presence on Capitol Hill to Start the Year.** NAHB continues to act as the voice of the housing industry in Congress. NAHB Senior Officers Bill Owens and Bob Peterson met with more than 20 lawmakers and urged them to focus on regulatory and workforce development issues to ease housing costs; 2025 Chairman Buddy Hughes testified before Congress calling on lawmakers to eliminate excessive regulations; and the entire NAHB Government Affairs team met with nearly 50 House offices in a single day urging swift passage of the Energy Choice Act.
3. **Save the Date!** The 2026 NAHB Legislative Conference, the most important lobbying event of the year, will take place in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, June 10. Learn more at [nahb.org/legcon](https://nahb.org/legcon).
4. **Looking Ahead in the Coming Months.** As we seek to build on our wins from 2025 and early 2026, NAHB will continue to work with lawmakers at all levels of government to eliminate obstacles that are preventing builders from constructing more homes and apartments. And we will work diligently to elect pro-housing lawmakers to Congress in the 2026 midterm elections.
5. **Uncertainty Persists Following Supreme Court Tariff Ruling.** While the Supreme Court's Feb. 20 ruling reins in presidential authority to impose tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the president still has broad latitude in setting tariff policy. NAHB will continue to urge the president to exempt building materials as part of his tariff strategy.
6. **2026 Housing Outlook: Ongoing Challenges, Incremental Gains.** The housing market will continue to face ongoing affordability challenges in 2026, including elevated land and construction costs.
7. **Housing Market Snapshot:** Due to the aftermath of the government shutdown last fall, the latest data for housing starts and new home sales is from January 2026. Single-family starts and new home sales posted monthly declines while multifamily production and existing home sales registered monthly gains. Builder confidence in March registered a one-point gain to 38 following a revised upward one-point revision in February.

## Key Wins to Start the Year

- NAHB scores important key wins in early 2026.
  - In a [case brought by NAHB and 15 states](#), a ruling by the U.S. federal court in Texas prevents HUD and USDA from implementing their final determination to impose the 2021 IECC and the 2019 ASHRAE 90.1 as the minimum energy-efficiency standards for certain single-family and multifamily housing programs.

Studies show that adoption of these energy efficiency standards will add between \$9,600 and \$21,400 to the price of a new home depending on the climate zone.

- President Trump on March 13 issued [two executive orders](#) on housing to [remove regulatory barriers](#) and provide [better access to mortgage credit](#) that will help ease the nation's housing affordability crisis. NAHB looks forward to working with the administration to implement these important directives.
- The House on Feb. 9 passed the [Housing for the 21st Century Act](#), NAHB-supported legislation that contains key provisions related to land-use and zoning, regulatory reforms and financing tools. NAHB is urging the House to [seek a conference](#) to hammer out differences with the Senate-passed 21<sup>st</sup> Century Road to Housing Act.

Specifically, NAHB is calling on House lawmakers to ensure the final package allows the construction of new rental housing by **striking the government mandate that forces investors to sell purpose-built single-family rentals.**

- At NAHB's urging, the National Labor Relations Board has [restored the 2020 joint employer standard](#). The revision rescinds a 2023 regulation that established a broad new test significantly lowering the standard for joint employer status under the National Labor Relations Act.
- Congressional appropriators agreed to [fully fund Job Corps](#) at \$1.76 billion in fiscal year 2026 after House appropriators last year proposed to slash funding by 50% to \$880 million. Job Corps is a vital source of skilled labor for the housing industry.
- The House on Feb. 25 approved the [Homeowner Energy Freedom Act](#), legislation championed by NAHB. The bill would repeal burdensome provisions from the Inflation Reduction Act, including a provision that provides states \$1 billion to incentivize the adoption of the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code.

## A Strong Presence on Capitol Hill

- NAHB continues to act as the voice of housing in the halls of Congress.
- NAHB Chairman Bill Owens and First Vice Chairman Bob Peterson on Feb. 4-5 [met with nearly two dozen influential lawmakers](#) and urged them to focus on regulatory and workforce development issues to help stem rising housing costs.
- In an unprecedented move to advance legislation vital to NAHB members, every member of the NAHB Government Affairs team on Feb. 10 fanned out across Capitol Hill urging House lawmakers to bring the [Energy Choice Act](#) quickly to a vote on the House floor. Your Government Affairs team met with nearly 50 House offices to seek prompt action on legislation that would prevent state or local governments from banning the use of gas in homes and buildings.
- 2025 Chairman Buddy Hughes testified before Congress on Jan. 22 and [called on lawmakers to eliminate excessive regulations](#) that are preventing builders from increasing the housing supply.
- NAHB Chief Lobbyist Lake Coulson on Jan. 14 participated in a [Housing Affordability Roundtable](#) hosted by the New Democrat Coalition. Lawmakers and housing stakeholders discussed ways to address affordability challenges and enact federal housing finance reforms.
- And in 2025, NAHB achieved [significant advocacy wins](#) that positively impacted the housing industry and our members. View the [full report](#) by logging on [nahb.org](#) and typing “2025 Advocacy Victories” in the search bar at the top of the page.

## NAHB Legislative Conference Set for June 10

- Our clout on Capitol Hill begins right here with you – our grassroots.
- And that’s why it’s important to spread the word now that the single biggest grassroots event of the year – the NAHB Legislative Conference – will take place in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, June 10 in conjunction with the Spring Leadership Meeting.
- This is a unique opportunity to speak one-on-one with your federal lawmakers and to push for housing policies that will help your business and our industry.
- To prepare you for your Hill visits, NAHB’s lobbying team on June 9 from 4-5 p.m. will walk through key policy priorities, messaging tips and what to expect in meetings. The session will conclude with state-based breakouts, giving you the opportunity to connect with your region and align on key messages for your Hill visits. Learn more at [nahb.org/legcon](#).

- The Spring Leadership Meeting will also feature an advocacy general session and regulatory townhalls on Thursday, June 11 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Hear directly from key Trump administration officials as they discuss NAHB’s top policy priorities and the latest developments impacting the housing industry.
- Following the general session, engage in interactive town halls with regulators focused on NAHB’s most critical advocacy issues, offering members the opportunity to gain insights, ask questions, and better understand the evolving regulatory landscape.
- Registration for the Spring Leadership Meeting will open in early April. Learn more and register at [nahb.org/slm](https://nahb.org/slm).

## Looking Ahead in 2026

- As we move through the year, NAHB will seek to build on our wins from 2025 and early 2026. We will continue to:
  - Work with the administration and Congress to eliminate regulatory obstacles that are preventing builders from constructing more homes and apartments.
  - Urge Congress to move quickly to pass a major housing package that cuts red tape, addresses zoning and land-use policies, and provides state and local governments an array of options to increase housing production.
  - Assist state and local HBAs as they work with local officials to overturn inefficient zoning rules, lower impact fees and expedite approvals for new home construction.
  - Ensure that housing remains a top national priority by working to elect pro-housing, pro-business candidates in the 2026 midterm elections.

## Uncertainty Persists Following Supreme Court Tariff Ruling

- The Supreme Court on Feb. 20 ruled that President Trump’s attempts to use emergency powers under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) was not valid.
- While the Supreme Court’s ruling reins in presidential authority to impose tariffs under IEEPA, Trump still has wide latitude in setting tariff policy.
- Indeed, shortly after the Supreme Court verdict, the president imposed a new, global tariff of 10%. Trump has threatened to raise the levy to 15%.

- Under the law he has now invoked, Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, tariffs may last only 150 days unless Congress extends them.
- Moreover, the Supreme Court’s ruling does not reverse duties imposed under other statutory authorities available to the president. This includes the approximately 35% combined antidumping and countervailing duties on Canadian softwood lumber, the 10% global Section 232 tariff on softwood lumber, and the 50% global Section 232 tariff on steel and aluminum imports.
- This tariff uncertainty, along with whether importers and businesses that paid tariffs under IEEPA can receive up to \$175 billion in refunds, leaves tariff policy in a state of chaos that will likely result in additional, complex litigation.
- American consumers and businesses are unsure how any new tariffs will affect them.
- In the meantime, more than 60% of builders surveyed by NAHB have reported seeing higher costs due to tariffs.
- With the nation facing a housing affordability crisis, [NAHB continues to urge the president to exempt building materials](#) as part of his tariff strategy because they raise construction costs, impede supply chains and result in market and business uncertainty that make it difficult for builders to price their homes.
- On the legislative front, NAHB worked with Sens. Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) and Chris Coons (D-Del.) to introduce the [Housing Tariff Exclusion Act](#). The bill would address the housing affordability crisis by creating an exemption process for building materials from tariffs.

## 2026 Housing Outlook: Ongoing Challenges, Small Gains

- Housing affordability conditions remain a top concern for most Americans.
- The housing market will continue to face ongoing affordability challenges in 2026, including high housing price-to-income ratios and elevated land and construction costs.
- The most important lingering inflation challenge is housing inflation. Rent and homeownership costs are still rising at a 3.0% rate. The length of the war in Iran adds additional risks to the inflation outlook.
- Meanwhile, economic uncertainty and tariff risks have hampered builders’ confidence and construction prospects.
- Roughly three-quarters of builders report difficulty pricing homes due to economic uncertainty.
- NAHB is forecasting single-family starts to fall 1% in 2026 and rise 5% in 2027.

- Because of stronger growth in 2025, multifamily starts are projected to decline 4% in 2026 and drop another 4% in 2027.

<b>Housing Market Snapshot</b>			
Latest Data: Jan*/February 2026 (as of 03/23/26)			
<b>Housing Starts</b>	Current Value	Monthly Change	Yearly Change
*Single-family:	935,000 AR	-2.8%	-6.5%
*Multifamily:	552,000 AR	29.9%	54.2%
<b>Median SF Home Price</b>			
* New:	\$396,000	-5.9%	-6.8%
Existing:	\$419,700	-0.2%	0.2%
<b>SF Home Sales</b>			
*New:	587,000 AR	-17.6%	-11.3%
Existing:	3,730,000 AR	2.5%	-1.1%

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

\*Due to the government shutdown last fall, January is the last month that data for housing starts and new single-family home sales have been released.

**NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index** – The index, which measures builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes, was 38 in March, following a revised upward one-point revision in February. Any number below 50 indicates that more builders view sales conditions as poor than good.

**NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz’s analysis:** “Affordability for buyers and builders remains a top concern. Many buyers remain on the fence waiting for lower interest rates and due to economic uncertainty. Builders are facing elevated land, labor and construction costs and nearly two-thirds continue to offer sales incentives in a bid to firm up the market. Meanwhile, long-term rates have moved higher because of concerns associated with the ongoing Iran war, including the possibility of sustained higher oil prices.

“Policy is a wildcard for the housing outlook. The [21st Century ROAD to Housing Act](#), approaching the last lap of its legislative journey, offers a whole set of supply-side improvements. However, the pending bill includes a seven-year disposition rule for new rental construction, which could further reduce single-family built-for-rent housing by an estimated 40,000 homes each year. Additionally, the [Trump administration in mid-March published an executive order](#) that instructs the executive branch agencies to implement policies that would help reduce the regulatory burden and increase mortgage credit.”