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This Week In Congress Radio Address: S. 57 New Housing Act Gets Vetoed By President,
1959 August 3

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear

Transcribed by: David Cardillo

[00:00]

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on August 3rd, 1959.

Mr. Kelly: From Washington, DC, United States Senator J. Allen Frear reports again to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, Senator Frear.

Senator Frear: Thank you, Mr. Kelly. The Senate Banking and Currency Committee, through its subcommittee on housing, has concluded hearings on the controversial Senate Bill 57: the proposed New Housing Act, recently approved by Congress, but vetoed by the President. The committee has received extensive testimony from representatives of the housing agencies of the government and from various private groups interested in housing. This subcommittee will meet in executive session to decide whether to recommend that the Senate seek to override the Presidential veto or draw up a new housing bill more compatible with the wishes of the administration. The decision of the subcommittee may be all-important for a number of reasons. First of all, though the President criticized the legislation as extravagant, testimony indicates that members of the Federal Housing agencies were not unanimous in the decision to disapprove the bill. Some members of Congress, both on the majority and minority sides have expressed the viewpoint that the Chief Executive erred in vetoing the legislation because of the danger that Congress would end its session without taking action on any housing bill whatsoever. This, of course, would be a critical blow to such programs as urban renewal, already under way in many parts of the country. You may recall that in his veto message issued on July the seventh, the President expressed the opinion that Senate Bill 57 would do more harm than good. He charged that the legislation was extravagant, inflationary, discriminatory, and unfair. These are quite harsh words. While it is true that spending authorizations under the legislation are high, it has been felt by many that since the housing industry is so basic to the needs of the country, it is necessary to write a bill along liberal lines to cover all of the requirements inherent in our overall housing program. One of the most discussed features of the vetoed housing bill is the authorization for additional public housing units, which the President feels is excessive. Public housing has long been a much-debated item in housing legislation. Other questionable features in the bill as seen by the President are the possible discriminatory application of urban renewal funds to a few large cities at the expense of smaller communities and the substitution of

Federal spending for private investment in the housing field. Personally, I can find points of both agreement and disagreement with the President. But the larger question in my mind, as it is in the minds of other members of our Banking Committee, is whether or not Congress will be able to write a new housing bill in the remaining weeks before adjournment. If it can do so to an extent that will preserve and continue essential features of our housing programs and not precipitate a curtailment in necessary new construction, well and good. We must remember that the activities of the housing industry are directly and indirectly felt by hundreds of manufacturers, not to mention the thousands of working people who are involved. The recommendations of the Senate's Housing Subcommittee, which it will make to the full committee this week, followed by the determination of the full committee itself when it meets on August the tenth, will have an important bearing on the final outcome. In fairness to all, let me emphasize that both the administration and the Congress want housing legislation enacted this session.

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation's capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time, speaking from the Senator Office Building in Washington.

[End 05:05]