

Written by Kathy

Monday, 19 March 2012 07:17 - Last Updated Thursday, 22 March 2012 22:47



CLEVELAND, Ohio-U.S. Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH), a Warrensville Hts Democrat whose 11th Congressional District includes inner city communities of Cleveland and Akron, and 14th Congressional District Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-OH), a Republican, announced today that they are co-sponsoring a bi-partisan federal foreclosure relief bill for the demolition of abandoned and foreclosed homes in major metropolitan cities where the foreclosure crisis has had its greatest impact.

During a press conference held a block from the vacant garage on Cleveland's east side where 19- year old Latasha Jackson and her one-year old daughter Chaniya Wynn were found murdered last month by an estranged boyfriend after an AMBER Alert twice faltered, Fudge and LaTourette said that they were introducing the bill dubbed The Restore Our Neighborhood Act of 2012 with the City of Cleveland in mind.



U.S. Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH)



U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-OH)

"The staggering number of blighted homes is beyond what communities can handle alone," said

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Fudge in a press release. "These vacant and foreclosed properties are a disease that infects entire neighborhoods, and people who diligently pay their mortgages are affected because they see their property values plummet."

Data reveal that there are roughly 26,000 vacant homes in Cuyahoga County, and 2,350 in the City of Akron, a municipality some 35 miles south of Cleveland.

In Dec. 60 Minutes did a CBS news special on Cleveland's foreclosure crisis and its impact on the community.

The congresswoman said that forty percent of the homes on the block at 3445 E. 69th Street where the press conference was held and attended by Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, Ward 12 Councilman Tony Brancatelli and a host of other elected officials are vacant, condemned or demolished, and that the Jackson administration estimates nearly 8,000 homes are in need of demolition.

And she said that suburban communities are feeling the heat too.

"It's estimated that more than 4,000 homes are in need of demolition in suburbs of the 11th District.," said Fudge.

Though urban cities are the impetus for the proposed legislation, if it passes Congress and is signed into law by President Obama it would provide a total of up to \$4 billion for states, and establishes land banks to issue 30-year bonds to finance demolition of vacant, foreclosed and abandoned homes throughout the nation.

The bill comes on the heels of protests from Occupy Cleveland over illegal home foreclosures in Cuyahoga County and calls by other community activist groups like Peace in the Hood for elected officials to do something about the safety issues that come with a plethora of abandoned and foreclosed homes, including violence against women and children.

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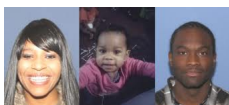


Laura Cowan, an anti-domestic violence advocate, speaks to 19 Action News during a vigil held after the bodies of 19-year-old Latasha Jackson and Jackson's one-year-old daughter Chaniya Wynn were discovered by police in an abandoned garage on Cleveland's majority Black east side.

"Something must be done to decrease the violence that women and children face," said community activist and Peace in the Hood Member Laura Cowan after a recent community vigil for Jackson and Wynn.

Police said that Thomas Lorde, 35, Jackson's estranged boyfriend, kidnapped Jackson and Wynn from her home at East 72nd St and Union Ave on 11:44 am on Sat. Feb. 18 . He took them to a nearby garage on E. 69th St. and shot them before turning the gun on himself.

Latasha Jackson (It), her one-year-old daughter Chaniya Wynn, and estranged boyfriend Thomas Lorde, whom police said abducted and murdered Jackson and her daughter before turning the gun on himself.



An AMBER Alert was issued but it failed two times before working on the third try, though it was later cancelled after police said their bodies were found about 2:00 am the following morning.

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