



By: [Michael Shapcott](#) - Wellesley Institute

On: Oct. 21, 2010 [National housing act bill \(C-304\) moves big step closer to law](#)

Great news! [Third reading debate](#) on [Bill C-304](#) - draft legislation to create a national housing plan for Canada – started on Wednesday evening in Parliament, and three of the four political parties in the Commons have pledged their support. Vancouver East MP Libby Davies, sponsor of the bill, told her fellow MPs: “This bill is very straightforward and clear. It calls on the federal government, in partnership with the provinces, the territories, first nations, municipalities and stakeholders, to develop a strategy that could take us forward and move us into a situation where we have a real plan with objectives, targets, outcomes, and deliverables. That is why so many people have signed on in support of this bill.”

The Wellesley Institute’s [Precarious Housing in Canada 2010](#) sets out a detailed analysis of housing need across Canada, and makes pragmatic recommendations about the components of a new national housing plan. Our [Canadian housing e-map](#) provides information on more than 160 housing and homelessness initiatives across the country.

Dartmouth-Cole Harbour MP Michael Savage (Liberal) said: “I commend the member for the work she has done on the bill. I know she would acknowledge that members of the Liberal Party have been supportive of it and have helped to steer it through. I specifically reference the member for Parkdale—High Park (Gerard Kennedy) who put in a number of serious amendments. ”

Brome-Missisquoi MP Christian Oullet (Bloc Quebecois), stated: “Quebec has developed widely recognized expertise. Earlier, I quoted the Wellesley Institute, which says that Quebec is ahead of all the other provinces because it has the Société d’habitation du Québec, which puts up energy-efficient buildings and has the same standards that UNESCO claims to have. We are not saying that the rest of Canada should not have such a body. We agree that the rest of Canada should have one. All we are asking is that this bill provide a way to recognize our own institutions. Then, Quebec would agree to let the rest of Canada come up with its own strategy.”

The Bloc supported Bill C-304 at first and second reading, but had threatened to withdraw its support in third reading unless there was recognition of Quebec. MP Ouelet’s promise, on behalf of the Bloc, to support an amended bill will ensure that the draft legislation has enough votes to pass in the Commons.

The only dissenting voice came from Conservative MP Dean Del Mastro, who said the bill remains “remains a fundamentally flawed piece of legislation.” One Conservative MP voted in favour of the legislation at second reading, so the Conservative caucus is not unanimous in its opposition to the bill.

The bill returns for more third reading debate, and is expected to be referred back to committee for an amendment to secure Bloc support. Once it passes third reading, then it moves to the Senate for consideration. Earlier this summer, the Senate unanimously adopted the [In From the Margins](#) report from Senator Art Eggleton that calls for a national housing plan.

Posted on the [Winnipeg Rental Network](#)

