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[Senators McConnell, Heller, Capito and Paul Introduce Legislation to Help America's Rural Communities](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell introduced legislation today to help rural communities harmed by Obama Administration policies that restrict access to rural lending opportunities. Sens. Dean Heller (R-NV), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and Rand Paul (R-KY) are original cosponsors of the *Helping Expand Lending Practices in (HELP) Rural Communities Act*, which would provide rural communities with better access to credit opportunities that can help grow their local economies.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) – created by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act of 2010 – permits certain rural lending practices in areas it deems “rural” or “underserved.” However, as many rural communities have noted, the current definition of rural as established by the CFPB excludes a significant number of demonstrably rural areas and neglects to provide rural communities with any input in the process. The CFPB recently put forth a proposal to revise its definition, but once again, it neglected to seek input from rural communities themselves.

The *HELP Rural Communities Act* would create an appeals process that would allow constituents to petition the CFPB with important local information for reconsideration of their status. This would give rural counties across the country a voice when the CFPB has incorrectly labeled them as “non-rural.” The bill also takes important steps to address the challenges rural communities face by eliminating arbitrary mortgage origination requirements that will ensure that rural communities bordering urban areas are still able to access credit services that are essential to rural small businesses and farmers.

“Under the current, CFPB definition, counties in Kentucky, such as Bath and Trigg, have been labeled as ‘non-rural,’ and are therefore barred from certain rural lending practices that are helpful to farmers and small businesses,” **Senator McConnell said.** “While I welcome the CFPB’s recent attempts to improve the rural definition, I remain concerned that rural communities – particularly those in Kentucky – have been left without a voice. Our legislation seeks to correct this by putting into statute a process that allows counties that have been improperly designated as ‘non-rural’ to petition the CFPB with additional

local information to reconsider their status in order to ensure that rural communities have the access to credit they need to grow their economy. I want to thank Senators Heller, Capito, and Paul for their support and look forward to working with them to get this important legislation passed.”

“I’m proud to join Majority Leader McConnell and Senators Paul and Capito to fight for the housing needs of rural communities in Nevada. Unfortunately, government bureaucrats in Washington are limiting homeowners’ mortgage financing options by incorrectly labeling rural Nevada communities as urban areas,” **said Senator Heller.** “This legislation will provide important tools for rural communities to fight these terrible decisions coming from Washington, and I look forward to advancing this critical bill in the Senate.”

“When seeking a mortgage, West Virginia’s families depend on the services offered by community banks and credit unions. The CFPB’s regulatory exemption for financial institutions in rural areas unfairly excludes some of West Virginia’s most rural communities. The *HELP Rural Communities Act* will enable West Virginia’s community banks and credit unions to petition for a rural designation and continue serving the West Virginians who depend on their services the most,” **Senator Capito said.**

“The *HELP Rural Communities Act* is a common sense piece of legislation that would help rural communities obtain their housing needs. I vehemently oppose the actions of overzealous bureaucrats who are limiting financing options in our rural communities. I am proud to work with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to expand housing options in rural Kentucky,” **Senator Paul said.**