118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION
H. R.  ____

To expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GARBARINO introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _______________________

A BILL

To expand eligibility for certain housing programs for qualified volunteer first responders.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Volunteer First Responder Housing Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

1. Bona fide volunteer; eligible employer; qualified services.—The terms “bona
fide volunteer”, “eligible employer”, and “qualified 
services” have the meanings given those terms in 
section 457(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 
1986.

(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe” 
has the meaning given the term “Indian tribe” in 
section 501(b) of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 
U.S.C. 1471(b)).

(3) QUALIFIED VOLUNTEER FIRST RE-
SPONDER.—The term “qualified volunteer first re-
sponder” means any individual who—

(A) is a bona fide volunteer performing 
qualified services for an eligible employer;

(B) continuously served as a volunteer for 
the eligible employer during the 2-year period 
preceding the date on which the individual sub-
mits a verification letter under section 3(b) or 
4(b);

(C) during each of the 2 years described in 
subparagraph (B)—

(i) met the minimum requirements for 
active membership established by the eligi-
ble employer; or
(ii) if the eligible employer did not establish minimum requirements, volunteered for not less than 200 hours; and

(D) is certified as a firefighter or other first responder in the State, political subdivision of a State, or jurisdiction of an Indian Tribe in which the individual is serving as volunteer.

SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM.

(a) In General.—A qualified volunteer first responder who submits to the Secretary of Agriculture (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) a verification letter in accordance with subsection (b) shall be eligible for a deduction in annual income under section 3555.152(c) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation), in the amount of $18,000.

(b) Verification Letter.—To be eligible for a deduction under subsection (a), a qualified volunteer first responder shall submit to the Secretary a verification letter from the head of the eligible employer for which the qualified volunteer first responder volunteers, which shall—

(1) include the date on which the qualified volunteer first responder joined the eligible employer as a volunteer;
(2) attest to the Secretary that the qualified volunteer first responder meets the requirements under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 2(3); and

(3) include a copy of the certification described in section 2(3)(D).

SEC. 4. GOOD NEIGHBOR NEXT DOOR SALES PROGRAM AND SIMILAR PROGRAMS.

(a) ELIGIBILITY.—A qualified volunteer first responder who submits to the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) a verification letter in accordance with subsection (b) shall qualify as a firefighter or emergency medical technician for purposes of any single family property disposition program carried out by the Secretary by regulation under section 204(g) of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1710(g)) that offers discounted home prices to firefighters or emergency medical technicians.

(b) VERIFICATION LETTER.—To qualify to purchase a home under a single family property disposition program referred to in subsection (a), a qualified first responder shall submit to the Secretary a verification letter from the head of the eligible employer for which the qualified volunteer first responder volunteers, which shall—
(1) include the date on which the qualified volunteer first responder joined the eligible employer as a volunteer;

(2) attest to the Secretary that the qualified volunteer first responder meets the requirements under subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 2(3);

(3) include a copy of the certification described in section 2(3)(D); and

(4) include a certification from the qualified volunteer first responder of the responder’s good faith intention to continue serving as a volunteer for the eligible employer for not less than 1 year following the date of closing.