

## One brick at a time

*Chicago Sun-Times Commentary*  
*Thursday, April 19, 2001*

By many accounts, there is a crisis in affordable housing in the Chicago area. In the six-county region, as the population increased by more than 500,000 since 1990, rental housing decreased by 52,000 units. And as the Chicago Housing Authority moves ahead with plans to demolish 18,000 units of public housing, by 2005 some 16,000 units of Section 8 housing in Chicago will lose the federal subsidy that has kept rents affordable. Low-income people are finding it harder to keep a roof over their heads. More needs to be done to preserve the area's dwindling stock of affordable housing.

The Illinois Senate has taken a small but welcome step, voting 53-3 for a bill that would raise \$26 million in incentives for developers to build and restore affordable housing. Under the Affordable Housing Donation Tax Credit, for every dollar donated to a nonprofit developer, Illinois taxpayers would receive a 50-cent credit toward state income tax. This bill alone won't solve the state's or the region's affordable housing shortage, but it's an important step. The House Revenue Committee votes on the bill today and should recommend it for speedy passage by the full House.