Dear Editor:

As the Senate takes up financial regulatory reform we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make sure that we lay the foundation for a sound and stable economy to keep future generations safe from the kind of economic chaos that has brought unemployment, foreclosures, empty storefronts and reduced services.

There are two forces at work in the debate over regulatory reform—those who want real reform of Wall Street's reckless practices that caused the near collapse of the global economy and those who want the status quo.

In general, change can make us uneasy, even when it is change for the better, and the status quo can be so comfortable. But, not in this case. Maintaining the status quo is not good for my community of Newman Grove and the many communities across Nebraska.

As a Nebraska community banker and a member of the Independent Community Bankers of America and the Nebraska Independent Community Bankers it is important for Nebraskans to know that we support real reform.

Without it, the Wall Street mega firms will continue to grow even bigger and more powerful.

Do you know that five institutions control more than 50 percent of our nation's deposits? The needs of Main Street will once again be sacrificed to the greed of Wall Street; consumers will lose the personalized services that community banks provide; and small businesses will lose their strongest champions.

If we don't pass real financial reform that holds the currently unregulated firms to the same rules that community banks must follow, then we leave ourselves open to the kind of irresponsible lending practices that preyed on borrowers and led to the subprime mortgage crisis.

If we don’t pass real financial reform we leave ourselves vulnerable to the financial meltdown that has put our savings, our pensions, our homes, our jobs and even our communities at risk. Congress needs to know that we need real financial reform. Go to www.ICBA.org to see what community banks are doing and what you can do to make sure that Congress enacts real financial reform.

Jeffrey L Gerhart

Chairman/President

Bank of Newman Grove

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