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Barrow Defends Private Property Rights; Votes to Restrict Use of Eminent Domain

*12th District Georgia Congressman says the government shouldn't overstep its bounds;
calls recent court ruling a threat to rural communities and low income home owners*

Washington, DC – Earlier this year, the United States Supreme Court issued a controversial ruling allowing the City of New London, Connecticut, to seize private property from local land owners in order to allow a major pharmaceutical company to build a private research facility on the seized property.

Sensing a dangerous precedent that could weaken an individual's property rights, particularly in rural communities and low-income neighborhoods, members of Congress, including 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow, quickly voted to pass a resolution expressing Congress's strong disapproval of the Supreme Court's recent ruling.

"The government has no authority to come in and seize a person's private property just to give it to some other private property owner in the name of 'economic development'," Barrow said. "That's not eminent domain, that's theft. If the Supreme Court is unwilling to uphold the Constitution and protect private property rights, those of us in Congress have a responsibility to step in and do what's right for the nation's private land owners."

Today, the House of Representatives went one step further by overwhelmingly passing H.R. 4128, the *Private Property Rights Protection Act*. The measure would deny federal economic development funds to any local or state government that uses eminent domain to seize and transfer land from one private owner to another for the intended purpose of "economic development." The legislation would also ban the federal government's use of eminent domain for "economic development."

"This bill places the values and the rights of private citizens ahead of corporate interests," Barrow said after voting in favor of the legislation.

Also included in the bill is the express sense of Congress that "the use of eminent domain for the purpose of economic development is a threat" to communities all across rural America. The bill passed the House by a vote of 376-38. It now heads to the U.S. Senate for additional debate and consideration.

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