

WASHINGTON: As the House prepared to vote on a housing-relief bill offered by Democratic leaders, President George W. Bush on Wednesday told the lawmakers, in effect, not to bother.

"I will veto the bill that's moving through the House today if it makes it to my desk," the president said at the White House, after meeting with Republican House leaders. "I urge members on both sides of the aisle to focus on a good piece of legislation that is being sponsored by Republican members."

The president's remarks were not surprising, given that the administration issued a statement on Tuesday evening declaring its opposition and saying that White House advisers would urge the president to veto it.

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