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Georgia gets a 'D' for housing, home ownership

Atlanta Business Chronicle

Georgia, which has been rocked by a high rate of foreclosures in recent years, was given a "D" in housing and home ownership in the Corporation for Enterprise Development's (CFED) 2009-2010 Assets & Opportunities Scorecard published Tuesday.

The bi-annual assessment of the financial security of households and individuals said Georgia must take several steps to improve financial security, including protecting the real estate market from predatory mortgage lending.

In Georgia, CFED found the median mortgage debt as a percentage of home value was 100.6 percent. This means the median homeowner in the Peach State is under water on his mortgage. The national median is 76.9 percent. Georgia ranks 49th in this category, ahead of only Michigan and Nevada.

"This data from the Scorecard, along with recently released numbers showing over a half million mortgages underwater in our state, is a clear signal that the foreclosure crisis is far from over," said **Georgia Watch** Executive Director Angela Speir Phelps.

The Scorecard also laid out recommendations for Georgia to improve asset building and preservation, including addressing lending practices. Georgia can improve its "D" grade in housing and home ownership by banning prepayment penalties and adopting sound underwriting standards, the survey noted.