

**EXAMINING THE HOMELESSNESS
CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES**

FIELD HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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EXAMINING THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., at the California African American Museum, 600 State Drive, Los Angeles, California, Hon. Maxine Waters [chairwoman of the committee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Waters, Sherman, Green, and Garcia of Texas.

Also present: Representatives Napolitano, Chu, Barragan, and Gomez.

Chairwoman WATERS. The Committee on Financial Services will come to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any time. Also, without objection, Members of the House of Representatives who are not on the Financial Services Committee are authorized to participate fully in today's hearing, and members of the local media who are invited to this hearing may engage in audio and visual coverage of the committee's proceedings.

I would like to remind all here that any recording of today's proceedings is solely to educate, enlighten, and inform the general public on an accurate and impartial basis of the committee's operations and consideration of legislative issues, as well as developing an understanding and perspective on the U.S. House of Representatives and its role in our government. This coverage may not be used for any partisan political campaign purpose or be made available for such purpose.

Finally, I want to welcome today's audience to this hearing, which we will be conducting under the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee on Financial Services.

Today's hearing is entitled, "Examining the Homelessness Crisis in Los Angeles."

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes to give an opening statement.

Good morning to everyone. Welcome to the Committee on Financial Services' field hearing entitled, "Examining the Homelessness Crisis in Los Angeles." This is our first Full Committee field hearing of the 116th Congress.

I would like to thank the California African American Museum and, of course, the executive director that you just met, George O. Davis, for hosting today's hearing.

As chairwoman of the House Financial Services Committee, I have made it a top priority to focus on homelessness. We are in a national homelessness crisis. Earlier this year, I convened the first-ever Full Committee hearing on homelessness, and today, we will continue our discussion by examining the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles and the Federal, State, and local responses to address this great challenge that is in our City and that is facing our nation.

According to the latest Point-in-Time Count, both the City and County of Los Angeles experienced a 12- to 16-percent increase from last year in the number of people who are experiencing homelessness. On any given night, we have nearly 60,000 people in the County, while over 35,000 people experience homelessness right here in the City.

I am describing some of our most vulnerable neighbors, including families with children, seniors, and unaccompanied youth. We cannot ignore that our homelessness crisis is directly linked to the affordable housing crisis. Too many people cannot afford to keep a roof over their heads as wages have not kept pace with rising rents.

Los Angeles has one of the least affordable housing markets in the United States. In LA County, a renter earning the minimum wage of \$13.25 an hour would need to work 79 hours a week in order to afford a 2-bedroom apartment. As a result, approximately 721,000 households in the County are severely rent-burdened, meaning that they pay more than 50 percent of their income on rent.

We need a bold and comprehensive response at the Federal, State, and local level to address the homelessness crisis. That is why I have introduced this bill, the Ending Homelessness Act, legislation that would provide over \$13 billion in funding to ensure every person experiencing homelessness in America has a place to call home.

The Financial Services Committee passed this legislation earlier this year, and I am committed to doing everything I can to get this bill passed into law. Both the County and City are working hard to combat the homelessness and affordable housing crisis.

Thanks to voters approving local ballot measures in 2016 and 2017, the City and County have robust new resources to fund initiatives that improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Proposition HHH has helped fund the development of thousands of new permanent supportive housing units, and so far, funding for Measure H has helped 14,000 people find housing. However, much more needs to be done, including passing legislation like the Ending Homelessness Act into law at the Federal level.

Today, we will receive testimony from representatives of the County and City, including Mayor Garcetti, who will testify on our third panel. We will also hear from housing and service providers who are on the ground every day delivering critical services to people experiencing homelessness.

I would like to thank our committee members who are in attendance here today. And I am so very pleased to have with us Representative Al Green, all the way from Houston, Texas.

Representative Sylvia Garcia is here, also from Houston, Texas. Please welcome her.

And of course, I would like to thank the members of the California delegation, who are not members of the committee, who are here today: Representative Nanette Barragan; Representative Jimmy Gomez; and Representative Judy Chu. And we are looking forward to being joined by Representative Brad Sherman.

I look forward to hearing the witnesses' testimony.

Today, we have three panels, and I want to welcome the first panel for today's hearing. Our first panel of distinguished witnesses are: Christina Miller, the Deputy Mayor for the City of Los Angeles Homeless Initiatives, that is in the Office of the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles; Peter Lynn, executive director, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority; Margarita Lares, chief program officer, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles; Monique King-Viehland, executive director, Los Angeles County Development Authority; Kevin Murray, former State senator, and president and CEO, the Weingart Center; and Phil Ansell, director, Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative.

Without objection, your written statements will be made a part of the record.

And each of you will have 5 minutes to summarize your testimony. I will give you a signal by tapping the gavel lightly when 1 minute remains. At that time, I would ask you to wrap up your testimony so we can be respectful of both the witnesses' and the committee members' time.

Before recognizing Ms. Miller, let me just say that there are other elected officials who have joined us here today, and I would like all of the other elected officials who are in the audience to please stand. We welcome you.

And Ms. Miller, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA MILLER, DEPUTY MAYOR FOR CITY OF LA HOMELESS INITIATIVES, OFFICE OF LOS ANGELES MAYOR

Ms. MILLER. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Waters and esteemed members of the committee.

My name is Christina Miller, and I serve as Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles under the leadership of Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Chairwoman, I want to begin by commending your leadership in introducing the Ending Homelessness Act. While the crisis is not as acute in most cities as it is here in Los Angeles, this is, undoubtedly, a pervasive issue nationally. It is one that has impacted big cities especially, but also rural areas and has left many families and individuals without the basic need of a safe place to live and thrive. That is unacceptable.

The only way we find our way out of this crisis is together. With decades of disinvestment from the State and Federal Government amounting to nearly \$500 million per year, on average, we need your help to make lasting progress.

Here in Los Angeles, we find ourselves in a bit of a paradox. We are seen as national leaders with the best suite of interventions to combat homelessness, yet our numbers increased last year by 12 percent Countywide, and the scale of our crisis is daunting.

It is fair to say that most average Angelenos—it is hard to feel that progress is being made. It is also fair to say that we can't get to everyone living on the streets fast enough.

So the question becomes, how does a City and a County with so many resources, with strong, committed leaders and a solid strategic plan, have one of the largest homeless populations of any city in America? The answer is twofold.

First, that while we have made tremendous progress in just a few short years to outreach, provide services, and place our homeless neighbors into housing, this effort only began in earnest a few short years ago, and the homelessness crisis in LA has been in the making for decades.

Second, it was especially put into focus for all of us this year as our homeless count numbers increased despite record housing placement numbers—almost 22,000 people Countywide—that homelessness is a symptom of a much larger macro issue in our region and across America. Our homelessness crisis is our affordable housing crisis.

Homelessness has, among other things, become the most extreme expression of poverty as the wealth divide grows deeper and more acute. So investing in our homeless service system alone won't solve this crisis. Concurrently, we must address the feeder systems into homelessness and increase affordable housing options for people to exit to.

Let me shift to telling you about the City's response to homelessness. This year, the City of Los Angeles homelessness budget amounts to \$462 million. That is 25 times the homelessness budget in 2015, with two-thirds of spending going towards permanent housing, as you mentioned, our HHH housing bond of \$1.2 billion with the goal of housing 10,000 people over the course of 10 years.

Through an action-oriented partnership with the County, LAHSA, and philanthropy, the City is focused on a response that can be broken down into three areas: preventing homelessness; reducing street homelessness; and increasing and preserving affordable and supportive housing. Additionally, for the first time ever, the City has a place-based strategy in Skid Row, the epicenter of the region's crisis.

I will touch on homelessness prevention first. This is a key part of our regional strategy. The City's largest anti-poverty program is the Family Source Centers, where a multitude of services are collocated at 16 centers Citywide, and a range of services including legal support, employment, and financial counseling are delivered.

We also have the Rent Stabilization Ordinance, which puts a limit on rent increases and requires just-cause evictions.

The best way to prevent homelessness is to keep people in their current homes. So, in addition, the City is scaling up an eviction defense program that provides tenancy rights, education, landlord mediation services, and legal representation, if needed.

Second, I will touch on our street strategy and interim housing efforts. With three out of four people living unsheltered in Los An-

geles, more than any other city in America, our work to address health and safety issues in encampments has to be balanced and coordinated with our field-based outreach and services' response to navigating people to housing and shelter.

We coordinate these efforts through a Unified Homelessness Response Center. It is a physical space where City leadership from departments are co-located and make real-time decisions on how to respond to the complex operational picture on the ground.

While we work to mitigate issues of cleanliness and health in encampments, the ultimate goal is to get people off the streets for good. Here, we leverage the army of outreach workers expanded to 800 Countywide to get households into bridge and permanent housing. Simply put, people live on the streets because we don't have enough indoor places for them to be.

To address that, through the Mayor's A Bridge Home initiative, the City is standing up 26 new interim housing projects that will yield over 2,000 beds, total. We have 5 projects open so far, yielding 247 beds. This is the biggest shelter capital program in the nation.

Third, to touch on our housing efforts, in order to meet the needs of our most vulnerable homeless Angelenos, the \$1.2 billion Prop HHH loan program has led to the City more than tripling its existing supportive housing pipeline with 110 projects and over 7,400 units on their way to people living on the streets and in other circumstances, putting us on track to meet the goal to build 10,000 units of supportive housing by 2026.

We have also created the City's first inclusionary zoning program, the Affordable Housing Linkage Fee, which mandates the inclusion of affordable housing and market rate developments or payment of a fee to capitalize our affordable housing programs.

We have also enhanced our land use incentives through the Transit Oriented Communities program and Measure JJJ, which will work in tandem with the linkage fee, resulting in more mixed-income developments.

We are strongly advocating for tenant rights in Sacramento and supporting tenant protection laws, like AB 1482 on the State level—it is an anti-rent gouging and rent cap law—and an anti-discrimination law for rental assistance programs. We are also firmly committed to innovation.

Finally, the City has a place-based strategy for the first time ever in Skid Row. Emergency State dollars in the amount of \$20 million have been put forth to address the immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term needs.

Thank you so much. That is just a snapshot of what the City is doing to address homelessness.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lynn, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

STATEMENT OF PETER LYNN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY

Mr. LYNN. Good morning, Madam Chairwoman, members of the committee, and members of the LA delegation. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify this morning, and I will have to say that

it is much nicer to address you as “Madam Chairwoman” than “Madam Ranking Member.”

I would like to cover some of the recent data on homelessness and also some of the trends that brought us here and some of the paths out of homelessness.

Last year, as you indicated, there was a 12-percent increase in homelessness in LA County, meaning nearly 59,000 Angelenos are homeless on any given night. Seventy-five percent of them, as the Deputy Mayor indicated, are unsheltered. This is reflecting the Statewide crisis in homelessness.

Of the other 43 continuums across the State, three-quarters of them showed an increase in homelessness this year. And that increase was greater than the count that we saw in Los Angeles largely due to the interventions that you mentioned that the voters put in service to house people out of homelessness in LA.

But the count only tells a snapshot. It is a moment in time. Our data indicate that in addition to the 59,000 people we counted, 55,000 more people fell into homelessness over the course of 2018. So, over 107,000 people experienced homelessness over the course of the year. That is a flow into homelessness of about 150 people a day.

With the interventions that we were able to deploy—and as the Deputy Mayor indicated, they are among the most robust in the country—we were able to house 133 people out of homelessness on a daily basis. That gap led to the increase, and that gap is primarily driven by housing affordability. At root cause, this is a crisis of housing affordability.

Los Angeles is the most populous County in America. We would be the tenth-largest State, were we a State, and we have the least affordable housing market in the United States by multiple measures.

More than a third of LA renters pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent. That is an extraordinary number of extremely low-income people hanging on by their fingertips. They are one medical issue, or one car repair away from homelessness on a daily basis. If we neglect to address the root cause of housing affordability—and the California Housing Partnership indicates that we have a gap of 517,000 units of affordability in the County of Los Angeles—we will not get ahead of this crisis, no matter how effective our interventions.

I also want to indicate very clearly that we cannot address homelessness without simultaneously addressing structural and institutional racism in America. It is a core driver for the homeless crisis that we have.

And there are radical disproportionalities in race, in the distribution of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles and in the United States. Thirty-five percent of the people who experience homelessness here are Black. That is against a County population of 8 percent African American.

The drivers for that represent a multitude of things. I would like to call out in particular the history of racial segregation in Federal policy that drove to deep housing segregation in this County through redlining and across the nation.

Federal policy instituted redlining, instituted housing segregation, and HUD policy enforced it for decades in the 20th Century. As American households were building wealth through home ownership, that was exclusively reserved for white households. African Americans were blocked out of home ownership through those programs, and the wealth-building of the 20th Century that occurred left African-American households with one-tenth of the wealth of white households in this country. That is a major driver for homelessness. There is no fallback for many, many African-American households.

In addition, our criminal justice system over-polices and over-incarcerates African Americans, African-American communities, and that racial disparity in incarceration has led to severe overrepresentation in our criminal justice system. In the County of Los Angeles, with 8 percent Black people in the County of Los Angeles, 30 percent of our jail population are Black.

Those drivers leave people with severe economic disparities and capacities within our housing market and our job market and every other aspect of our culture. Those have to be addressed if we are going to get to the root cause of addressing homelessness in the United States.

There are a number of resources that the Federal Government has constrained over the last few years, CDBG and home funding being particularly notable as significant reductions over the last few years, but the fundamental formulas that distributed the core Federal housing programs that address affordability were not fair. California was shortchanged.

We, in Los Angeles County, have 11,000 units of public housing compared to New York City with 170,000 units of public housing. So not only are our rents high and our incomes low, we do not have the affordability mechanisms like Section 8 in public housing that New York has.

I want to thank you, Chairwoman, for the opportunity to address this panel.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lynn can be found on page 108 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

Ms. Lares, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

STATEMENT OF MARGARITA LARES, CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER, HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Ms. LARES. Thank you, members of the Committee on Financial Services, for inviting the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) to provide written testimony and to speak today regarding the humanitarian crisis in Los Angeles.

And thank you for introducing H.R. 1856, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019. A special recognition to Congresswoman and Chair of the Committee Maxine Waters for being a strong, vocal, and persistent champion for our community.

HACLA supports H.R. 1856 so that communities with the highest need, like Los Angeles, receive the appropriate resources. This is both the most effective and efficient use of scarce Federal funding.

HACLA further supports the concept that priority for Federal assistance should be given to communities in which local governments, like Los Angeles, have adopted policies to aid in ending and preventing homelessness.

The Los Angeles community has stepped up to the plate by taking a collective approach in building and preserving affordable housing, committing ongoing rental assistance, and increasing supportive services. This commitment was further solidified when the voters of Los Angeles approved Proposition HHH in the City and Measure H in the County. While we believe that local governments and organizations must play a part in the solution, we need the Federal Government to be a partner in this effort.

For 10 years, HACLA has taken on the battle to end homelessness and to preserve affordable housing by using Federal rental subsidies such as the Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. HACLA has implemented policies giving priority to veterans, homeless veterans, homeless families, youth, and individuals, and committed vouchers for permanent supportive housing, which has led to 19,500 rental subsidies being utilized to house formerly homeless households. Without this assistance, the count of homeless individuals would be greater today.

Continuing in this effort, in 2017, following the passing of HHH and H by Los Angeles voters, HACLA committed an additional 5,000 project-based vouchers for permanent supportive housing. Within 2 years, HACLA will be utilizing nearly 40 percent of its resources to house people experiencing homelessness.

Besides the 36,165 people experiencing homelessness in the City, based on the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, there are 18,000 households on the voucher wait list. In October of 2017, when HACLA opened a wait list for vouchers, 188,000 households registered for assistance, but the number had to be reduced to 20,000 via a lottery process. There are also 51,000 households registered on the wait list for public housing. At minimum, 250,000 households are looking to HACLA for hope.

Clearly, HACLA cannot keep up with the demand without additional resources from the Federal Government. HACLA needs more vouchers, but with the appropriate funding levels for the Los Angeles area.

HACLA is expending 100 percent of its Federal budget authority but only able to utilize 93 percent of the vouchers. Average rental payments have increased by 20 percent over the last 4 years because of continued increases in the rental market, while the incomes of voucher holders have dropped or remained the same.

The average annual income for voucher program participants is \$16,953, or \$1,412 per month, yet the 2019 HUD-published fair market rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles is \$1,384 per month. The reality is that rental costs are high and incomes are low.

With less than 3-percent availability in rental units, the success rate in finding a place to live has dropped to 53 percent for households with a voucher. This is especially heartbreaking for individuals who have been unsheltered or who waited years on the wait list for a voucher, only to return the voucher or have it expire.

HACLA's inability to utilize 100 percent of its vouchers is having a negative financial impact on the agency. The Housing Authority funds its program operations with federally provided administrative fees for each voucher. With the drop in voucher utilization from 100 to 93 percent, HACLA is now receiving less administrative dollars. The loss of revenue is further compounded when only 79 percent of the determined fees required to properly administer the program are received due to a proration factor.

While the focus of H.R. 1856 is on ending homelessness, it is also important to support affordable housing for all who need it. Homelessness prevention is a vital piece, as the homelessness problem will continue to grow if the number of people becoming homeless grows faster than we can house them.

As you are aware, permanent supportive housing is the most appropriate solution for people experiencing homelessness and to prevent recidivism. New permanent supportive housing needs the operating support from a Section 8 voucher to work. HACLA is rapidly reaching its limits of vital Section 8 assistance. An additional allocation of vouchers from the Federal Government would make it feasible for HACLA.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lares can be found on page 103 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

Ms. King-Viehland, please, go right ahead.

STATEMENT OF MONIQUE KING-VIEHLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Ms. KING-VIEHLAND. Good morning, Chairwoman Waters and Honorable Representatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this homelessness crisis, I dare say the most critical humanitarian crisis facing the County of Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) is resolute in our mission to build better lives and better neighborhoods, as well as our commitment to end generational poverty and homelessness. Using a combination of local, State, and Federal resources, we administer several programs that provide housing opportunities for lower-income families, the elderly, the disabled, youth transitioning out of foster care, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Moreover, as the second-largest public housing agency in Southern California, we administer several federally funded programs that help in our efforts to combat homelessness—including Section 8, Continuum of Care, and VASH— by providing rental assistance for approximately 25,000 families.

And in light of the magnitude of the homelessness crisis, we recognize the need to take a bold step and use all of the resources at our disposal to meet the crisis head on and, therefore, created a homeless preference that dedicates 100 percent of our Section 8 turnover vouchers to house homeless Angelenos.

We created partnerships with the 18 other housing authorities operating in the County to align our policies and streamline access,

and we leveraged local resources to develop creative, flexible solutions that restricted Federal dollars did not allow.

For example, we created the Homeless Incentive Program, or HIP, to remove barriers to access for our voucher holders who were finding it next to impossible to use their voucher to secure a unit. HIP allows us to engage property owners to secure their rental units in exchange for a monetary incentive while qualified renters with a voucher are referred to the owner.

We also assist clients with funding to pay for security deposits, utility fees, and move-in expenses. Further, each client receives access to County-funded intensive case management services to help with the transition and ongoing supportive services, as necessary.

The LACDA administered approximately \$18 million in the first 2 years of Measure H, and these resources helped over 1,900 individuals and families come home. Additionally, we leveraged our partnerships to expand this program, which now supports 8 other PHAs in the County who have replicated HIP, leading to an additional 825 individuals and families housed over the same period.

We also provide capital funding and rental assistance for the creation of new affordable housing. Over the past 5 years, the County has provided \$294 million in capital subsidy for the development of affordable housing, leveraging \$2.3 billion in public and private funds that created more than 4,200 affordable units in the pipeline, two-thirds of which will serve special needs populations. This year alone, we will fund 5 times the number of units we funded just 5 years ago.

However, recognizing that we cannot build our way out of the crisis, several actions have been taken by the County to keep residents housed. For example, the Board of Supervisors passed a temporary Rent Stabilization Ordinance in effect until December 2019. The board also passed a Source of Income Discrimination Ordinance in April of this year barring owners from disqualifying a prospective tenant solely based on their source of income like a rental subsidy.

Despite these creative solutions, and while an unprecedented number of affordable and supportive units are in construction and being funded, the inflow, due to a myriad of institutional and systemic issues, racial and social class disparities, lack of economic growth and mobility, continues to conflate our efforts.

We look to our elected officials for actions to help address the crisis. We request support in sustaining or increasing funding for vital Federal programs, providing administrative flexibilities, allowing for regional waivers, and redistributing of unused Housing Choice Voucher funding.

In closing, the activities outlined in this testimony, as well as the more detailed written testimony, are indicative of the forward-thinking, collaborative approach that has fueled our fight, and it is a fight, to end homelessness.

The solutions to these problems are varied and complex, but one thing is clear: We cannot do it without significant investment from all levels of government. And the funding proposed in the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 introduced by Chairwoman Waters is an excellent example of the type of Federal investment needed to combat this crisis.

Again, the LACDA stands resolute in our mission to build better lives and better neighborhoods.

Thank you for the invitation to address this urgent matter.

[The prepared statement of Ms. King-Viehland can be found on page 96 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much, Ms. King-Viehland.

Senator Murray, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN MURRAY, FORMER STATE SENATOR,
AND PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE WEINGART CENTER**

Mr. MURRAY. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and members of the committee, for holding this hearing on what I also believe is one of the most crucial issues we face today. It is maybe the civil rights issue of our time. For reasons stated previously on this panel, one of our main sources of providing a safety net to our citizens is to solve this problem.

One of the things about homelessness policy is that it is essentially the Rorschach test of policy issues. If you are an affordable housing advocate, that is the driving force. If you are a mental health advocate, that is the driving force. If you are a civil rights advocate, that is the driving force. If you are a criminal justice reform person, that is the driving force of our problem of homelessness. The fact is, it is all of those things.

And one of the things I want to urge the committee to do is resist the temptation to find and fund a single silver bullet. Our current Housing First model, I think, goes in that direction. The rise of Housing First has also taken away funding for transitional housing.

The Weingart Center now houses about 600 people a night, right on the corner of 6th and San Pedro in Skid Row. We have had to transition from a transitional housing operation to a shelter and bridge housing operation.

What that has taken away is, it has taken away the funding for life skills and other skills that, even if you put a homeless individual into permanent housing, you have not necessarily given them the life skills to become a good neighbor.

So, again, I would argue to the committee and respectfully request the committee to look at this solution, that we find as many solutions as there are for types of people who have gone into homelessness and where they come from and that one size does not fit all.

Some of the things we also don't fund are family reunification and shared housing and roommates. As some of you who have been foster care advocates know, now we actually fund family foster care. We do not fund for someone to rent a room at a family member's house.

Our model is strictly build a unit, roughly a 250-square-foot unit with a bathroom and a kitchen, and try and put a person in that unit. Sometimes, those people don't want to leave their community, the location where they are. Sometimes they just don't like the rules that come from those things. And then if they don't take that, we put them temporarily in a shelter where most of the clients, frankly, do not want to go into shelters.

So one of the things that we have to do is we have to find a multitude of solutions and fund all of those. They do exist, but our model kind of stifles that innovation.

Again, for instance, the County has a flexible housing pool. There are flexible programs. But the overwhelming majority of the projects that happen in this area are 250-square-foot studio apartments.

There are people who need different types of support. And I think that, again, I want to emphasize this should be a multimodal approach.

The other thing is, as someone who operates right on Skid Row on the ground, we do need to aggressively enforce laws against those who prey on the homeless.

Right now, on Skid Row, there are criminal gangs who are literally charging people for a place on the sidewalk.

So one of the things that we have to do—and I understand that our views on criminal justice are not to necessarily be aggressive on Skid Row, but we have to find a way to make this differentiation because we are leaving people out on the street to be preyed upon.

The next thing we need to do is we need to find humane, but more aggressive ways to deal with the service-resistant. The fact is there are people who are service-resistant for a variety of reasons. It is not all mental health. It is not all substance abuse. Sometimes, frankly, it is very rational decisions that they make on their part. But we need to be aggressive about that.

And finally, I would like to say that Los Angeles taxpayers should be rewarded for taxing themselves to help solve the homeless crisis.

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. MURRAY. My last—

Chairwoman WATERS. One moment, Mr. Murray. We appreciate the enthusiasm, but would you please refrain from interrupting the presenters.

Thank you. Go right ahead. Wind up, Mr. Murray.

Mr. MURRAY. The taxpayers have voted to invest billions, literally billions of dollars, and the Federal Government should recognize that and leverage that money to help us meet this problem.

And finally, Proposition HHH and Proposition H expect to build roughly 10,000 units of permanent supportive housing, which I support, as one of the solutions. The fact is before we get to 10,000, we will run out of Section 8 vouchers to fund the revenue for those projects.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Murray can be found on page 117 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you, Senator Murray. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ansell, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your testimony.

STATEMENT OF PHIL ANSELL, DIRECTOR, LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOMELESS INITIATIVE

Mr. ANSELL. Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman, and members of the committee.

My name is Phil Ansell. I am the director of the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative. And I am delighted to testify before you today regarding the Countywide movement to prevent and combat homelessness, which was catalyzed by the Board of Supervisors in August of 2015 when they stepped forward and accepted a mantle of Countywide leadership to combat this crisis.

In the first 6 months of the County Homeless Initiative, we brought together 400 invited government and community experts in 18 policy summits to generate on a consensus basis a Countywide comprehensive plan to prevent and combat homelessness.

In February of 2016, 47 comprehensive strategies were unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors. And on that same day, the Los Angeles City Council adopted the first-ever Los Angeles City Comprehensive Homeless Strategy, a testament to the deep and new collaboration between the City and County of Los Angeles in combating homelessness.

At that time, the Board of Supervisors approved \$100 million in one-time County funding to jumpstart implementation of the strategies and at the same time identify the need for an ongoing source of funding, because an ongoing problem cannot be effectively addressed with one-time funding.

In March of 2017, Los Angeles County voters somewhat miraculously, in an off-year, low-turnout election, by a margin of 70 percent, approved Measure H, a 0.25 percent special sales tax generating an estimated \$355 million annually for 10 years legally dedicated to preventing and combating homelessness.

We told the voters that in the first 5 years of Measure H, we would help 45,000 family members and individuals move from homelessness into permanent housing. And in fact, in the first 21 months of Measure H-supported services and rental subsidies, from July 2017 through March of 2019, we helped 14,241 individuals and family members move from homelessness into permanent housing. We are on track to meet our goal of 45,000. And in that same 21-month period, Measure H helped over 28,000 family members and individuals move into interim housing.

However, as you have heard, despite this extraordinary effort by an extraordinary movement, a movement that has doubled the number of family members and individuals moving from homelessness into permanent housing since 2015, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County rose between January 2018 and January 2019 by 12 percent.

Now, as has been noted, our neighboring counties in Southern California and the urban counties in the California Bay Area all experienced much larger increases, typically 20- to 40-percent increases over the same period of time. Without Measure H, we would have experienced similarly large increases.

The fundamental problem is inflow. As noted earlier, in 2018, 133 family members and individuals every day moved from homelessness into permanent housing. But every day, 150 people became homeless. That difference, 17 more people per day becoming homeless than exiting homelessness, accounts for that increase in our homeless population.

The fundamental reason for that increase is economic. People are unable to pay the rent in a housing market governed by the law

of supply and demand where we have such a severe shortage of affordable housing that rents are increasing in such a way that is both forcing people who are currently renting out of their homes and making it impossible for low-income households to secure new rental housing which they can afford.

As was previously mentioned, we are in a paradoxical situation in Los Angeles County. Just 2 days ago, the Los Angeles Times ran a headline that said that communities across the United States look to Los Angeles County as a beacon of effective practice in combating homelessness. And yet, after the City of New York, we have the largest homeless population in the United States.

This paradox is attributable to inflow. We are bailing more water out of the homeless boat than ever before, but the hole in the bottom of our boat is so large that there is more water seeping into our boat.

Chairwoman Waters' H.R. 1856 exemplifies the sort of bold, major action we need from the Federal Government to partner with us in the 88 cities, the County of Los Angeles, and our hundreds of community- and faith-based partners as part of this Countywide movement to bring our homeless neighbors home.

Thank you very much.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

Let me introduce to you two of our Members from the Los Angeles County delegation who have joined us. Mrs. Grace Napolitano is here. And we have just been joined by Congressman Brad Sherman.

I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions. And I am going to go first to you, Mr. Ansell. You described very well what was happening in the County of Los Angeles. I want to know more information about Measure H that was passed in 2017.

I think it is important for everyone to understand that we do have funding from the Federal Government for all of the United States of America, and that is through the McKinney-Vento funds. So you get an allocation, just as the City does.

I was just looking up how much money you receive from the McKinney-Vento grants that we send out to all of our States. So in addition to that, you have the Measure H, is that correct?

Mr. ANSELL. Yes, that is correct.

Chairwoman WATERS. And you said Measure H is, what, \$100 million?

Mr. ANSELL. No. Chairwoman, Measure H is generating an estimated \$355 million annually.

Chairwoman WATERS. \$355 million. Will you describe to us exactly how the \$355 million is being spent?

I thank you for the general overview of what the needs are, but now you have started to apply that funding to various efforts of the County. Exactly what are they?

Mr. ANSELL. Certainly, Chairwoman, and thank you for the question.

The Measure H ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors in November of 2016 specified 21 specific strategies for which Measure H funding can be utilized. And in the spring of 2017, a group of 50 government and community stakeholders developed consensus recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding

the utilization of that Measure H funding across those 21 strategies for the first 3 years.

The strategies for which most Measure H funding is being utilized include homelessness prevention for single adults and family members, disability benefits advocacy to assist homeless disabled adults to secure Supplemental Security Income and veteran disability benefits, interim—

Chairwoman WATERS. Excuse me. If I may, I do understand the overall strategy and what you say was adopted. Can you be more specific about any monies that have been spent on a project or an effort of some kind?

Mr. ANSELL. Yes, ma'am, certainly.

The two largest categories of Measure H expenditures are for permanent housing and interim housing.

Chairwoman WATERS. So have you constructed, built, developed permanent housing?

Mr. ANSELL. We only utilize Measure H for capital construction to a very limited degree.

Chairwoman WATERS. Okay. So most of your money is spent on supportive services?

Mr. ANSELL. Actually, rental subsidies and the associated—

Chairwoman WATERS. How much money have you spent on rental subsidies?

Mr. ANSELL. In the prior year, we spent over \$100 million.

Chairwoman WATERS. Does that come from Federal funding or from Measure H?

Mr. ANSELL. From Measure H.

Chairwoman WATERS. How much money again?

Mr. ANSELL. Over \$100 million for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing. Both rental subsidies and the—

Chairwoman WATERS. How do you spend the permanent supportive housing money? Do you cooperate with the City of Los Angeles, for example, who may be building low-income housing, permanent housing? Do you coordinate with them in order to provide the money for the supportive services?

Mr. ANSELL. Yes, absolutely. In fact, the—

Chairwoman WATERS. Give me an example of that.

Mr. ANSELL. The County has a memorandum of understanding with the City of Los Angeles, where we have committed to provide intensive case management services for the tenants in 10,000 units of permanent supportive housing, which the City of Los Angeles is committed to creating over this decade, including the units funded through Proposition HHH.

So the basic model, Chairwoman, is that we use Measure H to pay for the services and, where necessary, the rental subsidy. The City funds capital. And we also use other County funding other than Measure H for the capital cost of developing new permanent supportive housing. And then we couple Measure H for services—

Chairwoman WATERS. Lastly, let me just—

Mr. ANSELL. —with Federal rental subsidies—

Chairwoman WATERS. If I may interrupt you, I think you said you do direct some of the Measure H money toward capital?

Mr. ANSELL. Only a very small portion.

Chairwoman WATERS. A small portion. Again, most of it is supportive services?

Mr. ANSELL. And rental subsidies.

Chairwoman WATERS. And rental subsidies.

And you have spent exactly—again, if you would reiterate how much you have spent on rental subsidies, who did it go to, and what is the criteria for that?

Mr. ANSELL. In the past fiscal year, we spent over \$100 million of Measure H for rental subsidies and services in two categories. For permanent supportive housing, we provide ongoing services and, where necessary, use Measure H to pay the rental subsidy.

Chairwoman WATERS. Quickly, can you explain to me who qualifies for rental subsidies? Who gets that money?

Mr. ANSELL. We have a coordinated entry system, as required by the Federal Government, which we use to match homeless families, youth, and individuals to permanent housing resources. So for permanent supportive housing, it is those persons who are the most vulnerable and have the highest acuity under our assessment tool.

For rapid rehousing, which is a time-limited rental subsidy with time-limited services, we serve a range of families and adults experiencing homelessness.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Al Green from Texas, who is also the Chair of our Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I thank the witnesses for appearing as well.

Madam Chairwoman, I am proud to say that I am a person who supports your bill, the Ending Homelessness Act, and here is why. The senator is eminently correct. This is bigger than any one single crisis. It is an affordable housing crisis, it is a living wage crisis, a mental health crisis, a substance abuse crisis, an incarceration crisis, and it is also an invidious discrimination crisis.

It really is comparable to a disaster. It is a disaster that is unnatural. For our natural disasters, we spend untold amounts of money—Katrina, over \$100 billion; Harvey, over \$100 billion. This bill is \$13.3 billion, and it takes a holistic approach to dealing with this unnatural disaster.

So, Madam Chairwoman, I am grateful that you have this bill. And if I may, I would just like to ask the panel, are you familiar with this bill? If you are, would you kindly extend a hand into the air, those who are familiar?

[Show of hands.]

Mr. GREEN. You are. Do you believe that this bill is a part of the solution to the crisis? If so, would you raise your hand, please?

[Show of hands.]

Mr. GREEN. I would like to know now—I always like to build a record—what about the LGBTQ community? There was not a mention of the crisis with young people who happen to be LGBTQ.

I have information indicating that approximately 40 percent of the young people who are on the street homeless are a member of the LGBTQ community. Anyone have any additional information that you can share on this topic?

Mr. Lynn?

Mr. LYNN. Representative Green, the data that we have locally would indicate that the number is less than that, but substantially greater than the general population. The prevalence of both youth who do not identify as male or female, but as a nonbinary youth, transgender youth, and LGB youth, represent about a quarter of the youth in our population who are homeless.

But it is a tremendous overrepresentation against the general population prevalence, and I think these youth are at particular vulnerability. There are a number of reasons why. They may not fit in at home and may not feel welcome or may not be safe. And fleeing violence is one of the main reasons for this population in particular to end up homeless.

We do have programs that specifically target that. I would like to call the attention of the committee to the Equal Access Rule roll-back that HUD has proposed. It is expected to come out in September, but this is a very damaging proposal.

HUD had moved the nation forward in addressing the rights and access of the transgender community in our shelter inventory and required all communities to provide equal access. That rule is being rolled back, and that will have devastating and life-threatening consequences for our trans youth and trans adults nationally.

Mr. GREEN. Here is what I would like to do. I have a staffer with me today, and I will make sure that that staffer visits with you after this hearing.

Let me move quickly to criminal records. I was a small claims court judge for a while, a JusticeCorps judge, and I understand how people acquire criminal records for penalties that require a fine only. And they go to jail not because of the fine initially, but because they don't show up in court to pay the fine because they don't have the funds to pay it.

And I am just curious as to the number of people on the street who are homeless because of the inability to pay a fine or because they were at some point charged with failure to appear in court?

Mr. LYNN. Sir, we don't have data specifically on that statistic. I will say that of the single adults who are unsheltered in our population, which is the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness in the County of Los Angeles, 63 percent have a history of incarceration in jail or prison. So, there is a very large overrepresentation of people who are homeless and people who have some degree of involvement with our criminal justice system.

There are devastating consequences to any amount of incarceration, any amount. People lose time in their jobs, they get fired, people lose their apartments for not meeting those requirements. But I don't have specific data on the number of people who are homeless simply for failure to appear.

Mr. GREEN. I am abusing the time now. I will yield back, Madam Chairwoman.

And I will make sure that we get with you, Mr. Lynn. Would you provide something more for me in writing?

Mr. LYNN. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Mr. GREEN. Okay. I yield back, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you for the time.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Sylvia Garcia from Texas, who is a member of the Financial Services Committee, for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you so much for your leadership and also welcoming us to your district.

Your efforts in making homelessness a top priority for our committee are significant not only for this City, but for cities across America. Your leadership in holding one of our first hearings about this subject and making sure the committee passed the Ending Homelessness Act as our first markup was monumental.

I am really here to listen today, and I appreciate from everyone their time here today and appreciate the moving personal stories, along with the policy recommendations that people are making.

Two weeks ago, I went to Detroit and learned about how the ripples from the financial and foreclosure crisis are still pushing people out of their homes, often illegally, 11 years after the Great Recession. Today, I am learning about the unique challenges that Los Angeles is facing with homelessness over the last year and over 58,000 residents in LA County. By comparison, in my area that number is less than 4,000. Two big urban cities, big difference.

This is a homelessness problem that is much worse than what we face in Houston, obviously, but I want to understand what is driving this crisis and what are the best policy solutions.

As a former social worker, and also now as Vice Chair of the Majority Leader's Task Force on Urban Poverty, I know we need to focus on supporting wraparound services at the local level to fully address the immediate needs of people in the homeless cycle while also looking at what structural reforms, as Mr. Lynn mentioned, we could make in our nation's economy so that we can make sure people aren't driven to homelessness in the first place.

This committee and this Congress as a whole need to look not only at the short term, but, more importantly, the long-term challenges ahead so that we can offer a basket of national policy options to make sure that every American city that faces this crisis can deal with it.

So, first, I want to start by saying that in my mind, the homelessness issue and the housing crisis in this country is a civil rights issue that we must tackle firsthand.

I would like to start this morning with asking Mr. Murray a question. Mr. Murray, I, too, am a former State Senator and I, too, like you, worked on many of the issues that we are talking about here today.

While I have not had a chance to fully visit your City, I did have the staff drive me by this Skid Row everybody keeps talking about. It is unlike anything like I have seen before, and I just wanted to ask you a question about this whole notion of wraparound services.

What is the greatest need in our system today that we need to make sure that we put in place not only in your City, but in cities across America who face the same challenges that Los Angeles does?

Mr. MURRAY. I think it is a variety of things, and I think it adjusts depending on the client, at least in my view.

Down on the ground, we have shelter people who literally don't want any services and just want sustenance for that night, and you are not going to convince them or it is very hard to convince them to take more. Then, you have people who want to turn their lives around, and some of those people have severe mental health issues. Some of those people have substance abuse issues.

The other factor is that if they are on the street for more than a year, more than likely they have developed some sort of trauma, which leads to PTSD or some other kind of mental health services. So I would say if you were looking for a singular thing to make sure that we include in the wraparound services, it would be mental health services, but a variety of them.

Some of them are going to be substance abuse. Some are going to be PTSD. Some are just going to be life skills. After you have been out on the street for years, sometimes you need some help just becoming a good neighbor so that you are more likely to thrive in your new housing placement.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you.

Ms. Lares, are you familiar with H.R. 2763, a bill I filed to challenge the proposed rulemaking from the current Administration on, frankly, kicking about 60,000 children across America out of public housing? It is my mixed-status family bill. If you are familiar with it, what impact would it have on this City and this County?

Ms. LARES. I am familiar with both the proposed rules for mixed families, as well as the proposed immigration rules. I can share with you what the impact would be here in the City of Los Angeles on public housing.

On the proposed bill for the mixed families, that would impact 11,000 individuals in both our public housing and Section 8 program. The proposed immigration rule, that would impact 18,000. So, these are two separate numbers potentially impacting more than 30,000 individuals and their households.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. So if the regulation were put in place, how many of those would be children?

Ms. LARES. For the mixed family, a couple thousand. For the proposed immigration rule, we are talking about 3,000.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Are you talking about the public charge rule?

Ms. LARES. Public charge, yes.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. So both would have a severe impact on those families?

Ms. LARES. Absolutely.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you.

I yield back, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Brad Sherman, from the 30th District of California, who serves on the Financial Services Committee, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

The homelessness issue is a combination of issues. Some are homeless because of substance abuse and psychological problems and trauma. Some are mostly homeless because the rent is too damn high. They can't afford it. And I am going to focus this panel

on that second group, people who would be in an apartment if we had Wichita rents, but we have Los Angeles rents.

And I would say that this group of homeless people is just the tip of the iceberg. For every person sleeping in their car or sleeping in the park, there are 10 people who can barely afford their rent. There are 10 people who have an unlawful detainer that they are worried about, and they are at a payday lender trying to—there are 10 people who are cutting back on their medication so that they can pay their rent. There are 10 people sleeping on their friend's couch.

We only see the folks who are absolutely homeless. But for so many people, the rent is too damn high. And it is a problem that we face in a number of big cities, but particularly here in Los Angeles, and some of it relates to relatively unique factors here.

One is we are the biggest city in the world without a grade-separated rail system. So anytime you try to build something, the first reaction is not, that person is going to be with me on the train. No. It's, that person is going to be in a car in front of me on the freeway.

We have NIMBYs (Not in my Backyard) who won't let you build or people who think that their property values will go down unless the people who live near them are richer than they are.

You have the fiscalization of land-use planning, where every city is told, if you can attract an auto dealer, you get more money, and it costs you almost nothing. If you accommodate housing on that same property, you get no extra money for your City budget because the property tax goes elsewhere, and it is going to cost you some money for police and fire.

But what I want to focus on here is impact fees. You want to build an apartment, and we need money to run the government. We should tax people based on their ability to pay. We have something that does that. It is called the State income tax. Instead, in part, we are taxing people on their ability to build, and those costs are then passed through to tenants.

Ms. Miller, the LA Times had a headline stating that the reason housing is so expensive in California, is that counties and cities charge developer fees. Local impact fees impact whether a project gets built. And if the law of supply and demand, one of the few laws Congress cannot repeal, is operative, if we can get more supply, that will influence not only the people who live in that new unit, but it will bring the supply and demand cost down.

So what has LA done to mitigate impact fees as a barrier to development, particularly the development of affordable housing?

Ms. MILLER. Yes. Thank you for your question.

I will start by saying the City of LA is committed to removing regulatory barriers to building housing at a cheaper rate and keeping costs low, particularly so they don't get passed on to tenants. I can talk about three areas in which we are working to streamline the development of new housing here in the City of LA.

The first thing I will start with is the Mayor's Executive Directive 13. This is a streamline measure that puts the building for any affordable housing project essentially at the top of the line. And its aim is to—

Mr. SHERMAN. Let me interrupt. I know you are talking about streamlining things. If somebody wants to build an apartment unit in the San Fernando Valley, how much of a fee is imposed per unit for them to be allowed to build that unit? What is the impact fee?

Ms. MILLER. Sir, I can get that information to you in more detail in terms of the exact breakdown of what the fees are. What I can tell you is that through the streamlining measures—

Mr. SHERMAN. And I do want to comment—I rarely do this to somebody—it is not that these fees will be passed on to the consumer. It is that the building won't be built, and then everybody will pay a higher rent because the supply of units will be down while the demand is still up. So, will you try to tell us what this fee is?

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Ms. MILLER. Certainly. We can have our chief housing officer provide some more detailed information.

Chairwoman WATERS. Please, please, please refrain from interrupting the questions and the responses.

Ms. MILLER. What I can say is that there is a fee which we are championing in that because it promotes equitable building, and that is our Affordable Housing Linkage Fee.

So there is an Affordable Housing Linkage Fee, which ensures the private market builds equitably. It gives multifamily developers a choice. They can either include low-income units in their projects, or they can pay a fee into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which is used to capitalize further and create more housing.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Judy Chu of the 27th District of California for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. CHU. Thank you, Chairwoman Waters, for holding this very, very important hearing and also for your incredible leadership with your very important bill to combat homelessness.

I would like to address a question to Ms. Lares. In Los Angeles County, we have housed an unprecedented number of the homeless, but we have also still seen an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in LA County, which rose 12 percent last year.

In my area of the San Gabriel Valley, homelessness rates rose even faster. But I do have some positive news about one City in my district, which is the City of Pasadena, which saw a 20-percent decrease in its homeless count this year.

And they attribute much of this progress to the success of permanent supportive housing, and they say that it provides stable housing to formerly homeless individuals and families and offers services like employment training and healthcare onsite. And the model can really work, as they have a near 100-percent retention rate amongst its residents.

And of course, we have such incredible nonprofits, like Union Station Services for the homeless, which provide so many supportive services for the homeless.

So, Ms. Lares, you talked about permanent supportive housing. Why is this important, and how does it play a major role in combatting homelessness, and what could the Federal Government do to increase it?

Ms. LARES. You are exactly correct. The City of Pasadena has used its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs to project-based housing developments that provide permanent supportive housing just as you described it.

They have used every possible voucher available. My understanding is that they are reaching the caps. All of the housing authorities are allowed to project-base 20 percent of their vouchers and, very recently, an additional 10 percent under HOTMA for housing homeless individuals.

So one big benefit or one big ask that the housing authorities would have is to increase the number of vouchers and also increase the caps that go along with it as well. That would certainly help all of our communities across the country.

Ms. CHU. Thank you for that.

Senator Murray, I would like to talk to you about foster youth who are at heightened risk of homelessness and how the Federal Government can better serve them. In fact, I sit on the Ways and Means Committee. I am working on Family Support, which has jurisdiction over foster youth, and I am a member of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth.

And in a recent survey from the organization, Voices of Youth Count, 29 percent of 13- to 25-year-olds have experienced homelessness, and they reported spending time in the child welfare system.

In your experience providing services to individuals and families at the Weingart Center, how can the Federal Government improve support for foster youth so that they don't experience homelessness?

Mr. MURRAY. Again, once they have gotten to us, they are already experiencing homelessness. But I think one of the things we can do is fund more specific things directed toward that age group. Both the County and LAHSA have specific transitional age youth programs.

In a previous life, as you may know, foster children and foster care was one of my big projects. But I think it even gets worse if you talk about transitional age youths who are also LGBTQ because they are particularly vulnerable out on the street.

So just specific funding and specific mental health funding for their specific issues might, I think, help the problem. But we do have to bolster up—as we are talking about public policy matters, which are not necessarily dealing with the homeless, but dealing with the path to homelessness, you really need to invest some money on, where do aged-out youth in foster care go?

The overwhelming majority of them—and I don't have the specifics at my fingertips—go either into the homeless system or the criminal justice system. And I think to the extent that when we have put a child in foster care—and again, I spent some time in dependency court in my early career—we become their parent, and we are just doing a horrible job of it based upon the numbers at foster care.

So I think we ought to put some money into when they are getting ready to age out, some transitional money for them so that they don't experience homelessness.

Ms. CHU. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Nanette Barragan of the 44th District of California for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Thank you for your leadership in holding this hearing, and for your bill, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019.

I often hear when I am in my congressional district and at town halls, what is going on, what is happening, how come this is getting worse, and why is it that the bills, the propositions that we have passed and taxing ourselves, why does it feel like it is not getting any better?

It is a challenging question. And we have heard a little bit today about the progress that is being made.

Maybe one of you can talk a little bit about what the chairwoman's bill will do. What kind of an impact will having her bill pass, in helping address the homeless crisis that the City and the County of Los Angeles is facing?

Ms. MILLER, do you want to take this?

Ms. MILLER. Sure, thank you.

What I will start by saying is that we have spent the last few years building a system to respond to the crisis that is on the streets, and we are scaling that system up as we speak.

What that system has told us is that there are 31,000 people in the system right now who have been engaged by an outreach worker. So more than likely when your constituent sees someone on the streets in an encampment, more than likely they have been touched by the system. There is some outreach worker somewhere providing services to them.

They have had their needs assessed with our standardized assessment tool. They have gathered their documents needed to get into housing, whether it is income verification, a driver's license, an ID. They are ready to go.

The problem is this bottleneck of not having enough housing for them to exit the system to. What we find is similar in our shelter system. There are people ready to go. They have part-time jobs. They are engaged in services. They have the mental health support that they need. But there is no permanent destination for them to land. There is no affordable housing resource for them.

Ms. CHU. Ms. Miller, if you could just address what the chairwoman's bill would do, that influx of \$13 billion, how would that help what you are trying to do?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you so much.

I would say the biggest gap that we have right now is a rental subsidy, is the ability to connect someone to an operating subsidy that they can then apply to a unit in the community and get them into housing. And I think the chairwoman's bill with the set-aside of resources for affordable housing would be critical to getting a throughput in our system that we are lacking right now.

Ms. CHU. Thank you.

One of the things that we haven't mentioned is how Chairwoman Waters has been leading not just on this issue, but on the fight—on the cuts that have been proposed.

This President's Fiscal Year 2020 budget requested to actually dramatically cut housing benefits that help families who are low-income seniors, who have people with disabilities, families with

children, and veterans. Overall, the Administration's proposed cut to HUD programs has been by an astonishing \$9.6 billion. That would be devastating.

And so that is why it is so critically important we have hearings like this and that we have everybody make sure that they are participating and that they are engaged so that we can help fight back against these proposed cuts.

We hear proposal after proposal that will be cut back, that would only negatively impact all of the work that people on this panel are doing and will do.

Ms. King-Viehland, would you maybe like to comment on what would happen, how the problem would get worse if we had this actual cut of the \$9.6 billion to HUD programs?

Ms. KING-VIEHLAND. We have talked about the fact that we have more than 10,000 units of permanent supportive housing in the pipeline. And we have talked about how critically important those units are.

But without vouchers and rental subsidies, those units don't come on. So it goes beyond sort of discussions of impact fees and other costs related to rising housing costs. If we don't have the vouchers and the rental subsidies to be able to put those people into the units, those projects don't get built.

Ms. CHU. Thank you.

Ms. Lares, you have done fabulous work. I represent the community of Jordan Downs. Can you give us an update on where we are on that, and when are we going to see people moving into that facility?

Ms. LARES. Sure, absolutely. And we would welcome you to join us on move-in day.

We have made a lot of progress with Jordan Downs, with the new Jordan Downs and the new housing there. We will be ready to move our first families into new units this fall, September-October, right around the corner. So, I am a little bit ahead of the game because we intended to provide an invitation to help move in our families.

Completing phase one and phase two of Jordan Downs and moving into other phases, as you are well-aware, we are replacing one-for-one unit and exceeding that amount. Currently, there are some 104 units at Jordan Downs. The new Jordan Downs will have 1,400 units.

Ms. CHU. Great, thank you.

I will yield back my time. I will leave it for the next round.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Jimmy Gomez of the 34th District of California for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Chairwoman, thank you so much for hosting this important hearing.

I got elected to Congress in July of 2017. That is when I was sworn in. It was one of the first elections after the Presidential. And I represent downtown, everything from Hancock Park—very wealthy neighborhoods—to Skid Row, to Boyle Heights, an incorporated City, Torrance, to Eagle Rock, and we see a variety of issues.

One of these things that I tried to work on since I was a student at UCLA was this issue of housing. And I recognized early on that we had no housing policy in the State of California, that the housing policy was sprawl: Build out as far as the eye can see so that you can reduce the rents and the pressure in the big cities.

How do I know that? Because my family, when we were living in Orange County, got forced out. The house that we lived in was bulldozed and turned into a Taco Bell. Imagine that, a Taco Bell.

So my parents went out to Riverside, found a house there, and bought it. It was relatively affordable. But that release valve no longer really exists.

Out in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, they are having higher rent increases percentagewise than here in the City and LA County. So it doesn't exist.

And this is a problem, as everybody knows, that was years in the making. Skid Row didn't come out of nowhere. It was a strategic strategy by the City of LA and the County to push and force people who were homeless into a specific area and provide the resources, right?

So we act like this thing came out of nowhere, you know? But it is something that decision-makers, over the years, have created. Like it or not, everybody is responsible.

So what are we going to do now, is the question. There is no other State that has this kind of issue. I asked a friend of mine who is the Director of Housing and Community Development for the Governor—previously Governor Brown and now Gavin Newsom—he was at HUD. He said there is no other place, no other State that has this type of problem.

So, I agree. We have a lot of problems, and we have to look at a multimodal approach. I agree with that.

But we have to start thinking outside the box. And maybe it is time to break the wheel when it comes to this merry-go-round of homelessness and housing that keeps going over and over and over because it seems that we are losing ground.

One of the issues that I want—we heard some things. Mr. Ansell, you mentioned that the County provides the services and some rental assistance and that the City—I take it that you meant the City of LA—is responsible for capital development. One of the things I want to know is, what are the other cities in LA County doing when it comes to providing more units? Because I know that not everybody is carrying their fair share.

Mr. ANSELL. Thank you, Congressman. If I could just clarify my prior comment?

Both the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles are investing very heavily both locally-generated and State funding for the development of permanent supportive housing. My specific comment previously was with respect to Proposition HHH and other Los Angeles City funding for permanent supportive housing, how is the County collaborating? And in that regard, yes, we are providing the supportive services that go along with those new units.

With respect to the other 87 Cities in the County, we have seen that Cities have a central role to play in this Countywide effort and have reached out in an unprecedented way to Cities across the County to engage their participation. The County has funded 40

Cities in the County to develop City-specific homelessness plans and has allocated a portion of Measure H funding to those Cities to support implementation of those homelessness plans.

The single biggest focus of those City homelessness plans and of the County funding provided by the Cities is to support Cities' utilization of their land use authority in a way that will result in the production of additional permanent supportive housing, affordable housing, and other interim housing.

That can include, for example, feasibility studies of individual parcels, government-owned parcels, for example, that could be used for housing, or consultant assistants to help small cities modify land use ordinances, for example, relative to motel conversion or permanent supportive housing or accessory dwelling units.

So what I would say is that, on the one hand, we are engaged with smaller Cities throughout the County in an unprecedented way and that there is an unprecedented level of interest among many cities in responding to this challenge and constructively addressing the homeless crisis, including through the increasing housing. And on the other hand, we have a very long way to go in ensuring that Cities throughout the County exercise their land use authority in a way that maximizes the availability of housing.

Mr. GOMEZ. My time is up, but that is a good point, because I know for a fact that the State of California has given back to a lot of cities, former State property, Caltrans property, that was supposed to be used for housing, and they are not using it. And that is a big problem.

With that, I yield back.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Representative Grace Napolitano from the 32nd District of California for 5 minutes for questions.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you for all of your hard work, and I thank the rest of the committee as well.

Ms. King-Viehland, we know that there is a great amount of homelessness in Los Angeles County and that you have recently changed strategy to prevent it, addressing it more holistically, and ending generational poverty.

But do you work with the Cities and do you work with agencies, all of them? Everybody is doing their bit, but does anybody get together and talk as a group and say, okay, let's start a program?

Because I am Chair of the Mental Health Caucus in Washington, and mental health is the third-largest reason for homelessness. We must include it in our program so that it can take care of the problem before it gets worse.

The Cities sometimes start a preventive program. NOAH is beginning to look at uniting to find out how can they keep people in homes if they have a health emergency, an accident, all the things that Kevin talked about. They can pay for 1 or 2 months' rent so that the family can stay in the home and not become homeless. But that is an innovative program that needs help and should be able to make a difference in keeping people in homes.

Also, attractive places for the homeless to go are the riverbeds, near hospitals. But we must also talk to the railroad and Caltrans and others to find out what properties they have in excess that can

be used to build homeless—all right, near railroads, noisy; near freeways, pollution maybe—but at least they would have transitional housing. What can we do? What are you doing to accomplish that?

Ms. KING-VIEHLAND. Thank you for the question.

I think to your original question, yes, there are a great deal of efforts that are happening from a regional perspective. And Measures H and HHH have really served at helping to build an infrastructure.

So we are working in partnership with our partners at the Homeless Initiative. At the County, we work with LAHSA, we work with HACLA and others, and we are implementing programs in a much more systemic and seamless way. And that, I think, has been helpful.

As I mentioned earlier, with something like our Homeless Incentive Program, for example—

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. But is that in LA City alone, or is it throughout the County?

Ms. KING-VIEHLAND. No. It is Countywide. So, that is sort of the benefit. There are 18 other housing authorities, for example, that are operating within the Southern California region.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Oh, I am sure there are more than 18.

Ms. KING-VIEHLAND. And one of the things that is great is that we are working with them. So our Homeless Incentive Program, it looks the same for a client, whether they come in HACLA's door or whether they come in our door because the idea is the program is seamless. It runs the same at HACLA as it runs for us. So the idea is to create a regional approach to attacking issues.

Much of the housing development we are doing, we have a lot of those projects in partnership with the City of LA for the work that we are doing, as well as the City of Pasadena, the City of Glendale, and other Cities as well. So, we are taking a Countywide approach to addressing the issues and breaking down those silos.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. But do you include communications to the Cities of what you are doing? Because I know my Cities, some of them know, and others don't. And I need to know what kind of information is going to the Cities to make them aware because they also have the homeless transitioning to them.

Mr. ANSELL. Yes. Congresswoman, through the Homeless Initiative, we have very actively engaged Cities throughout the region. We have convened two homeless summits, the first ever in the history of all of the Cities.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. All right. But how about—

Mr. ANSELL. And we have a designated liaison for each of the Cities. And we invited all of the Cities in the County to develop their own homelessness plans with funding from the County.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Do you work with the COGs, the Council of Governments?

Mr. ANSELL. Yes, we do. We work with the Council of Government. In fact, we provide ongoing funding.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Does the money flow to the Cities?

Mr. ANSELL. We provide funding to the COGs to coordinate the efforts in their Cities. And then as I mentioned, we have approved

funding to those Cities that developed homelessness plans to support implementation of those plans.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I would like to know more about those because I have not heard yet. There is some information coming back to me, but not necessarily with the COGs or with some of the Cities.

So it is important that we get the ability to understand that they are part of it, that they are—maybe their representative doesn't attend meetings. I don't know. But we need to make sure because the homeless situation is getting critical, and it is worse in the San Gabriel Valley.

Madam Chairwoman, I yield back.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

First, I would like to thank our first panel of witnesses for their testimony today.

We will now pause to set up our second panel for today's hearing. Thank you so very much for coming, and for your testimony.

While we are awaiting our second panel, I would like you to know that I did ask our elected officials to stand.

Mayor Robert Pullen-Miles represents Lawndale, California.

Mayor Patrick Furey represents Torrance, California.

Mr. Jimmy Gow is here, who is a Commissioner in Torrance, California, working with homelessness issues also.

I am told that we have a number of ministers in the audience and that many of the ministers are involved with homeless ministries in the church, where they are taking clothing and food and toiletries down to Skid Row every day.

Would all of the ministers please stand, and Shane Scott who is representing Macedonia Church?

We also have a number of veterans in the audience. Will all of those who are veterans or representing veterans organizations—I see in the back of the room we do have representatives from New Directions. Please stand, Larry, in the back of the room. Raise your hand.

Thank you all, very much.

Would the second panel please come forward?

[brief recess]

Chairwoman WATERS. The committee will return to order. Please take your seats. We are going to get started with our second panel. Thank you very much.

Our second panel includes: Tim Watkins, president and chief executive officer, Watts Labor Community Action Committee; Joe Horiye, Western Region Program vice president, Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Becky Dennison, executive director, Venice Community Housing; Anthony Haynes, Speak Up! advocate, Corporation for Supportive Housing; Erika Hartman, chief program officer, Downtown Women's Center; Chancela Al-Mansour, executive director of the Housing Rights Center; Alma Vizcaino, speaker, Downtown Women's Center, on behalf of Domestic Violence Homeless Services Coalition; and Dora Leong Gallo, president and chief executive officer, a Community of Friends.

Without objection, your written statements will be made a part of the record.

And each of you will have 5 minutes to summarize your testimony. I will give you a signal by tapping the gavel lightly when 1 minute remains. At that time, I would ask you to wrap up your testimony so that we can be respectful of both the witnesses' and the committee members' time.

Mr. Watkins, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

STATEMENT OF TIM WATKINS, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WATTS LABOR COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you. And I won't spend too much time saying what an honor it is to be here, but I really appreciate your work and always have on all fronts.

Having been here for 66 years, always being a boy of Watts, born and raised in Watts, I have been blessed to be around the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) its entire lifetime, as my father was the founder 54 years ago, and you get to see a lot in 54 years.

But as an organization that has consistently, constantly, and without interruption provided service and helped support the underdog in society, I would say that today, maybe I am here representing the "brothers on the ground floor."

I don't know if you have ever heard that term, but in Watts, there is a network of people who live under people's houses that have raised foundations. They live there with the cooperation of the homeowner or the renter.

They bump around at night. No one gets alarmed. But basically, they are allowed to subsist in the foundation space of those homes.

Over 54 years, we have seen Mayor Yorty, Mayor Bradley, Mayor Riordan, Mayor Hahn, Mayor Villaraigosa, and now, Mayor Garcetti. I won't bother to talk about the broken promises of the past because maybe this time we are going to see a promise kept. But so far, so far what we have seen over 54 years is a trail of broken promises.

WLCAC was around when across the country, mental health institutions were being shut down, and we saw the earliest vestiges of homelessness in Watts when people started showing up with nowhere to go. We started serving homeless populations well before there was a LAHSA, before there was a City or a County response to homelessness in South Central Los Angeles, and we have been serving ever since.

I think it is important to recognize that although we made those powerful steps early on, LAHSA has been at the forefront of providing, I guess you would say, the mainstream of service or the funding, the support and the services that homeless people need. But it is just not enough.

We are all here, maybe even some of you—I remember some recent Congress Members who were just a check or two away from homelessness themselves. And I think it is important for you to realize that in this audience, lots of us are just a couple of checks away from being homeless, and that perhaps, along with what we do about homelessness, we think about the problem of poor public policy versus poverty and what that really means. Because we keep

talking about poverty as though that is the problem, when poverty is but a symptom of poor public policy and what drives us into these conditions that are not easy to sustain.

Yet, we find ourselves with less in self-sufficiency, certainly less in self-determining. And we watch the descendants of people who, up until 1865, were able to get what they wanted and still do, and here we are hundreds of years later still just trying to find what they call that so-called level playing field.

There is no level playing field. The playing field is full of empty goldmines, diamond mines, waterholes, oil wells, you name it. We look for scraps on the surface and every night get disparaged.

The people in my community get disparaged and treated as if they are subhuman because they have the nobility to go through our trash. They dig through our trash to find recyclables and then line up as if they should be incarcerated by getting pennies on the dollar for what their work is worth all night.

And I think that we have to start looking for, how do we prevent the problem in as many ways as we can that are not the traditional ways? We will talk, we will talk, and we will talk about hundreds of millions and billions of dollars. But it takes too long to get the help that people need.

When you think about public policy versus poverty and how this all happened, how much of it is by design? Why does someone have to be homeless for a year before they can qualify for service? Maybe their condition doesn't allow them to survive a year of waiting. How many of our people can stand the product of geopolitical gerrymandering in our community?

Watts is a place that, unfortunately, is 15 miles away from its base. It is very difficult to get the kind of representation that we need that is Watts-specific.

What are the impediments? Certainly, we have persecution, human blight, the problem of transitional housing that was long ago constructed to help homeless people that has been torn down only to be replaced by transitional housing.

I know I have to go. We have a lot of resources, and I would like to talk about that in the follow-up, if possible.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Horiye, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JOE HORIYE, WESTERN REGION PROGRAM
VICE PRESIDENT, LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION**

Mr. HORIYE. Thank you.

Chairwoman Waters and members of the committee, my name is Joe Horiye. I am the program vice president for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), established in 1979. LISC is a national nonprofit dedicated to helping community residents transform disinvested neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity.

We provide local community development organizations with loans, grants, and equity investments, as well as technical and management assistance. We have a national footprint with local of-

ices in 35 cities and a rural program. We invest approximately \$1.4 billion each year in these communities.

Our doors opened in LA in 1987. We have developed more than 11,000 units of affordable housing in the region with community partners. Nearly \$34 million of investments for affordable housing and community development projects have been made in California's 43rd District alone.

I oversee the work of our LA office, but I wish to acknowledge Tunua Thrash-Ntuk, who is the Executive Director of LISC and a native Angeleno. Our LA team is deeply embedded in community-based efforts to provide assistance to those experiencing homelessness and/or in need of affordable housing.

I have seen firsthand the challenges of opportunities that exist providing affordable housing to people experiencing homelessness and how nonprofit organizations and others can improve their lives. I would like to focus my time on what is needed to address this issue.

First, this country has to be committed. If we want to end homelessness, these efforts must be supported through sufficient funding resources.

For example, our nation's commitment to reducing chronic and veteran homelessness has resulted in substantial declines. This progress is mainly due to the Federal Government targeting resources for the work, HUD's Continuum of Care. Homelessness assistance programs provide the main Federal resources and incentivize local CoCs to prioritize housing-first approaches.

LISC supports full funding for HUD's CoC's Federal assistance programs and was pleased to support Chairwoman Waters' Ending Homelessness Act of 2019. This bill would increase McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grant resources for new permanent supportive housing, authorize additional resources for special purpose Housing Choice Vouchers, increase National Housing Trust Fund funding, authorize funding for outreach to homeless people, and better integrate affordable housing and healthcare activity. This bill recognizes the resources the Federal Government has to provide if our country is going to continue to make advances in reducing homelessness.

LISC LA has worked since its inception to provide assistance to homeless service and affordable housing providers. We provide grants to build organizational capacity, and one of the most important Federal capacity-building tools we utilize for this work is HUD's Section 4 Capacity Building Program. Section 4 awards help nonprofit and housing community development organizations further their affordable housing goals.

One example, People Assisting The Homeless, PATH Ventures, used HUD Section 4 support to develop West Carson Villas. This development consists of 110 units, 55 which are reserved for formerly homeless residents. LISC also provides financing for affordable housing development, and we typically use the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) equity.

The housing credit is the nation's most important development finance subsidy source for affordable rental housing and works by providing equity for such housing in exchange for Federal tax credits. Our subsidiary, the National Equity Fund, NEF, is one of the

largest nonprofit syndicators of LIHTC and a national expert in using housing credits to finance supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.

LISC also uses other Federal resources to support this work, including the Capital Magnet Fund (CMF). CMF is a competitive affordable housing award administered by the Treasury Department, which can be used flexibly by mission-driven lenders such as LISC, and nonprofit developers for affordable rental housing for very poor households.

An example of the impact of CMF and the housing credit is our recent support for LA Family Housing's Irmis Family Campus. Once a homeless shelter operating as a former motel, it completed its transformation into a campus that offers health, housing, and other services in San Fernando Valley.

The campus includes the Fiesta Apartments, 49 units of permanent supportive housing targeting chronically homeless single adults. LISC NEF invested nearly \$13.6 million of housing tax credit equity in a \$20.7 million project, and LISC used its CMF award to provide a reduced interest permanent loan to close the financing gap on the apartments.

LISC LA's history of supporting affordable housing projects for those experiencing homelessness has shown us that progress can be made when resources are made available to address need. We urge Congress to adequately fund and support Federal housing assistance and tax credit programs which provide stable housing for homeless people and to support programs that build the capacity of nonprofit organizations serving these communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. And I look forward to working with you and your staff on ways to end the homelessness crisis here in LA.

Thank you.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

And now, we will hear from Ms. Dennison. You are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

**STATEMENT OF BECKY DENNISON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
VENICE COMMUNITY HOUSING**

Ms. DENNISON. Thank you.

Good morning to everyone. I am Becky Dennison with Venice Community Housing. We own and operate affordable and supportive housing focused on ensuring inclusive communities on LA's west side.

For over 30 years, we have been providing housing and other support to those most in need, and we are currently building new supportive housing in Venice, which is home to about 1,000 unhoused residents. We are also active in community organizing and advocacy efforts that preserve existing affordable housing and promote the rights of tenants and unhoused residents.

We simply, as everyone said, need vastly more resources to produce extremely low-income and supportive housing. So, affordability matters in production. We can't just produce and expect the results to trickle down.

The Federal budget for affordable housing was cut almost 80 percent in the early 1980s and has never been restored. And as was mentioned, we continue to see cuts chipping away at it.

And locally, production is nowhere near the documented need. In the last Housing Element, the City projected to produce 75 percent of its overall housing need, but only 17 percent of the extremely low-income housing need. So with the largest production gaps at the lowest income levels and overproducing luxury housing, homelessness continues at crisis levels in LA.

LA has also underproduced supportive housing, creating just a few hundred units per year for 20 years. And the ballot initiatives that people have discussed are incredibly important and will do good work, but are a drop in the bucket in the overall need.

We need the City and the County and the State to create permanent and sustained resources, and we need the Federal Government to supplement those resources. Most specifically, we need to increase the rental subsidy, as people have said.

Right now, we are making decisions in a scarcity environment. We have to balance the need for new supportive housing, affordable housing, public housing, and tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers within this limited pool of subsidy, and there is just nowhere near enough to cover even a portion of all of those needs.

The Federal Government must also help us address the issue of underproduction of extremely low-income housing, because while the Tax Credit Program is incredibly important, it is just not designed to produce extremely low-income housing, and therefore, that is where we see our biggest gap.

Beyond housing production, we must put more effort into the prevention of homelessness, and the preservation of all affordable rent stabilized and other subsidized rental housing must be prioritized. And while these are largely issues at the local and State level and our local government and State government must make preservation more of a priority, we also do need targeted Federal investment to make this a comprehensive effort.

Prevention of homelessness also requires increased tenant protections and proactive enforcement of those protections. Tenants far too regularly face unjust and illegal eviction and other forced displacement.

And again, some of these challenges and solutions are focused on State and local issues. And our State Government has some important policies pending, but the Federal Government can help ensure more proactive enforcement of public and subsidized housing tenant protections, rent-to-prevent-eviction programs and funding, and then the prevention of any policy that would produce displacement, such as the proposed mixed-status policy that was also discussed.

Government entities must also eliminate the unacceptable overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness that has been persistent in LA for far too long. Los Angeles has studied this recently and has a report and recommendations that Mr. Lynn discussed that really look at the long history of institutional racism, and further exploration of that from this committee is recommended.

And lastly, LA must end the criminalization of homelessness. This is an area where LA has been uniquely horrible in its efforts.

We have the largest unsheltered homeless population in the country, and yet, without creating any significant housing alternatives, LA has invested incredible financial and political resources and policies explicitly intended to criminalize homelessness and other initiatives that result in harassment and forced displacement among housed residents.

These practices exacerbate homelessness, lengthen the time people remain homeless, and discriminate against people for their current unhoused status. This simply must end and be replaced with health-based, street-based interventions until LA provides housing for all in need.

So, in closing, we know that LA, and California as a whole, must enact substantial new policies and funding streams that focus on production at the lowest income levels and homeless prevention, as well as eliminate harmful policies.

But LA and all regional efforts cannot succeed without more investment at the Federal level. H.R. 1856 reflects a significant step forward, and additional efforts will be needed to solve this crisis.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dennison can be found on page 68 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you, Ms. Dennison.

Mr. Haynes, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

**STATEMENT OF ANTHONY HAYNES, SPEAK UP! ADVOCATE,
CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

Mr. HAYNES. Good afternoon. My name is Anthony Haynes, and I am a Speak Up! Advocate for the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).

I grew up in an average middle-class community with six siblings and a mother and a father and a home. And my mother and father used to shelter me from what was around the corner until one day I found out what was around the corner, and I became an alcoholic. I became a functioning alcoholic.

Over the years, my disease got worse, but I was still able to find a job, and keep an apartment until I could no longer work due to suffering from mental health issues.

After 10 years of homelessness, I ended up on Skid Row, and I went to jail for 1 year, exactly 1 year, for possession of marijuana. And when I got out of jail, I knew I needed something different. I knew I wanted to do something different with my life.

So with that year clean from alcohol and drugs, I got on a wait list. And it took a long time for me to get permanent supportive housing. But when I finally got in, it made a big difference in my life.

Supportive housing is very important, not only just housing a person, but with the wraparound services, with the case manager onsite, the therapist, the psychiatrist right at my disposal.

It took me a long time to find my worth, you know? They had so many groups to offer, art group, journal group. So I ended up doing a knitting group. And coming from the streets, I said, "I am not going to sit in a circle and share my feelings." So, I took a knit-

ting group for exactly 1 year, and in the group, they sat and watched Oprah and knitted.

So after 1 year, I never learned to knit, but I sat with a group of women who helped me regain who I am. They gave me so much perspective on life. They showed me a different way that I can go and to grow.

So it was so important for me to have those groups. And then saying that the housing is important, but more important is the wraparound services that come with it, the people who are going to be there for when you need them.

Giving them housing is important, but now that you are housed, you have to learn to live with yourself. And how do I do that sober? It was a big challenge. Depression sets in.

But long story short, I continued to work on myself. I continued to take advantage of what was offered to me, the help provided within the supportive system.

And with that, they watched me grow. And I am now a peer advocate manager for the Skid Row Housing Trust. I moved into one of their buildings, and now I get to be an advocate for the future residents and help them understand what it is going to feel like once you move into your own apartment by yourself. You are going to feel lonely.

And a lot of us resort back to what we used to know, our old friends and the drugs and alcohol. So now, I show them a way that you don't have to go back. We are going to build a new bridge, we are going to build new friends, and we are going to go a new way.

So now, I help the potential residents navigate all of the resources that are at their disposal within the community. And it is so important that they know that it is out there for them.

A lot of stuff is offered to them, but half the time, it is stuff they don't need or can't use. Everything offered is not for every individual.

So, I just want to thank you for coming out and listening to what we have to say.

Chairwoman WATERS. And I want to thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Haynes.

Ms. Hartman, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF ERIKA HARTMAN, CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER,
DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER**

Ms. HARTMAN. Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, members of the committee, and members of the California delegation. My name is Erika Hartman, and I am the chief program officer of the Downtown Women's Center.

For over 40 years, the Downtown Women's Center has been providing housing and vital services to women in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles, and today serves over 4,000 women per year.

In recent years, we have seen homelessness in Los Angeles rise to unprecedented levels, and in the last year, the number of women grew to 18,337 individual women. Homelessness among women is increasing nationally as well, and on any given night, 216,211 women are experiencing homelessness in this country. Women com-

prise 39 percent of the individuals experiencing homelessness, and 49 percent of those are unaccompanied women.

The Downtown Women's Center exists because we recognize that women are a unique subpopulation experiencing homelessness with corresponding unique needs. For this reason, we continue to advocate for HUD to officially recognize women as a unique subpopulation, specifically unaccompanied women.

As an example of the unique vulnerabilities faced by unaccompanied women, they are 4 times more likely to be chronically homeless and for this reason need resources to serve them. The areas of focus should be on increasing data and research, targeting services and housing toward women, and requiring that gender competency and program evaluation be a criterion to receive funding for housing and service provision.

At the Downtown Women's Center, we serve anyone who identifies as female or was an identified female at birth. Women experiencing homelessness on Skid Row identify as LGBTQ at a rate of 15.4 percent, compared with 3.4 percent of the general population. For this reason, we are strong advocates for maintaining the Equal Access Rule without changes but would otherwise support H.R. 3018.

Ninety percent of women residing in Skid Row have experienced some form of violence during their lifetime, and for this reason, we are advocating for H.R. 6545 and for the release of additional dollars from the Victims of Crime Act Fund.

As we know, women in the military experience high rates of sexual harassment and assault, making them vulnerable to other-than-honorable discharges and thereby ineligible to receive HUD-VASH vouchers. For this reason, we ask for support in advancing H.R. 2398.

Even with the level of risk that we know women face on the streets, 64 percent of women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County are unsheltered. And unsheltered women remain without stable housing for an average of 14 to 16 years. And because of insufficient shelter in Los Angeles, just 1 in every 12 is able to access a shelter bed on any given night.

Women who are unsheltered age close to 20 years faster, and between 2014 and 2018 in Los Angeles, the number of deaths among homeless women more than doubled. While the life expectancy for women is typically longer than for men, for homeless women it is shorter. The average age of death for women experiencing homelessness is 48. For this reason, it is crucial that H.R. 1978 receives the necessary support, and we also hope to see more House Members cosponsor H.R. 3272.

In Los Angeles, economic hardship is the cause of 53 percent of homelessness. We have seen rents increase by 32 percent, while income has gone down by 3 percent.

Income inequity bears especially hard on women, who continue to make only 79 cents for each dollar earned by men, and women of color are the most significantly impacted.

There is also vast disproportionality by race of individuals experiencing homelessness due to systemic racism. The racial inequities of the justice system have caused African-American women to be the most significantly impacted by histories of incarceration when

seeking employment, with an unemployment rate of 43.6 percent, almost 10 percent higher than any other demographic.

Women also comprise a significant portion of single-parent households. And in the event that HUD moves forward with the proposed change to the mixed-status rule, we support H.R. 2763.

Homelessness is a matter of resources, and for that reason, ongoing support of H.R. 3163 is essential to ending homelessness. And most importantly, the investment of H.R. 1856 would significantly increase the likelihood that organizations will have the opportunity to get ahead of the curve in meeting the needs, ensure focus is maintained on ending the homeless crisis, protect our progress, and help us gain more ground through mandatory spending.

Thank you, Chairwoman Waters, for introducing this legislation, and I thank the committee for your support of this bill.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hartman can be found on page 89 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much, Ms. Hartman.

Ms. Al-Mansour, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

**STATEMENT OF CHANCELA AL-MANSOUR, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER**

Ms. AL-MANSOUR. Good afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you, other respective Members of Congress, for allowing us this opportunity to speak with you today.

I am Chancela Al-Mansour, the executive director of the Housing Rights Center. I am also on the board of the National Fair Housing Alliance and the California Reinvestment Coalition as well.

In 1993, I was here, and a similar hearing was held in Los Angeles at the Federal Reserve Bank, and Members of Congress came here to determine what were the reasons for the civil unrest, what was the reason for the lack of income and housing and so forth in South Los Angeles.

And we talked about poverty, we talked about racism, lack of access to credit, no banks. We talked about no grocery stores, no jobs. And the one thing we didn't really highlight was homelessness. Here we are 26 years later, and the main issue we are facing right now is homelessness caused by all of those things.

As you have heard, the U.S. Government's history of financing and promoting redlining, which was the denial of home ownership and home mortgage loans and home improvement loans to Black and other racially targeted groups, created racially segregated and highly racially concentrated neighborhoods with no services. This created the urban blight that depreciated the value of Black-owned homes that today have made those neighborhoods ripe for gentrification and displacement.

Everybody complains about LA's traffic, but with new access to public transportation and revitalization measures, Boyle Heights, Highland Park, Crenshaw District, Chinatown, and other parts of South Los Angeles are all experiencing extreme displacement of Black and Brown and low-income Asian communities.

And for those fortunate groups who were able to purchase their homes and own their own homes, those abuelas/the grandmothers/the big mommas, they have lost their homes. When they pass

away, their home is often sold. It is too valuable for the family to hold onto. Those houses transition, and those families will never be able to come back into Los Angeles.

Also, just the attack on Black-owned homes in general, the lack of access to credit and the targeting through predatory home mortgage loans and so forth, has created the circumstances which we see now in which Black home ownership has just been devastated in Los Angeles.

And when you talk about—big momma’s home was the refuge, right? It was the place where people who had been evicted—maybe they were formerly incarcerated, maybe they otherwise lacked housing—those children and those grandchildren could go to big momma’s house to live. But now that she does not have that home, many of our community members don’t have that place of refuge to go to.

And also, the Housing Rights Center, I want to identify that the prevalence of housing discrimination and the devastating effects of housing discrimination are also causes of our homelessness crisis. While race discrimination is highly reported, not necessarily by tenants, but we find it in our investigations at the Housing Rights Center, because oftentimes people don’t know that they have been discriminated against based on race, and so investigations and testing is strongly needed.

And I thank Congressman Al Green for his March 2018 letter supporting the Fair Housing Act, supporting Fair Housing Initiatives (FIT) funding. And all of you Members of Congress who signed that letter, I thank you as well, and I encourage for those who didn’t sign it, to sign it as well.

The FIT program must be fully funded, and we are asking for at least \$52 million of funding, which isn’t that much considering it goes to 100 organizations over the country to combat housing discrimination.

Testing and other programs is the only way we can really determine oftentimes if race discrimination happens. Persons with disabilities also face high rates of discrimination in housing. More than 50 percent of the complaints that are filed with the Housing Rights Center are based on discrimination based on disability.

The Fair Housing Act also must be preserved as well and disparate impact. Disparate impact is being challenged. It is being targeted by this current Administration. The use of the disparate impact theory to prove unlawful discrimination must be protected.

HUD has initiated its plan to weaken the Fair Housing Act by making it impossible to bring a case using the disparate impact theory, which maintains that a facially neutral policy when applied can have a disparate impact upon a particular group because of their membership.

Banks and insurance groups are leading the charge to dismantle this important fair housing protection. So we ask that in all ways, the use of the disparate impact theory be protected. Also, HUD’s Equal Access Rule must be reinstated as well.

Moreover, families with minor children, Latinos, African Americans, and women are disproportionately impacted by these facially neutral policies and face eviction every day in the City of Los Angeles, and we ask for their protection as well.

I also ask that we preserve the Community Reinvestment Act. A way that this committee and other Federal agencies and departments can address the homelessness crisis is to strengthen the Community Investment Act. It did well for California as well. A recent survey by the California Reinvestment Coalition found that over \$27 billion in 2016 came to low-income communities in California because of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA).

HUD approved a conciliation agreement just a couple of weeks ago that settled a Los Angeles area redlining case against OneWest Bank and CIT Corporation. That was a case filed by the California Reinvestment Coalition for HUD because of OneWest Bank and CIT's redlining policies here in Los Angeles. They had over 60 retail bank branches in Los Angeles and Southern California, and not one of those was located in a community of color.

The CRA exam also must be strengthened and must consider fair lending law violations. Until recently, all of the bank regulators considered unlawful discrimination lending as a factor when denying CRA exams. They don't anymore.

Finally, a right to counsel. We must have a right to counsel to protect tenants who are being evicted.

Thank you.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much, Ms. Al-Mansour.

Ms. Vizcaino, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

STATEMENT OF ALMA VIZCAINO, SPEAKER, DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER, ON BEHALF OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMELESS SERVICES COALITION

Ms. VIZCAINO. Good morning, everyone. My name is Alma Vizcaino, and I thank you so much for listening to my experience.

I am here today to bring some light to some statistics you will hear about the impact on homeless women. What is troubling me is that I was one of 216,000 women experiencing homelessness across the nation. In Los Angeles, among both sheltered and unsheltered women, approximately half experienced domestic violence.

Of course, please keep in mind this is a count of women who felt comfortable sharing that they had experienced domestic violence. Due to the stigma surrounding domestic violence, we know that this is an undercounted experience.

This was the case for me. I did not acknowledge that I had experienced domestic violence until just 2 years ago when I was sitting in a mental health support group at the Downtown Women's Center, a local nonprofit that supports women with housing and healthcare. I swept it under the rug for a long time. There was never a good time to talk about it, so I didn't.

Consequently, I have experienced periods of homelessness, mental health problems related to the impact of trauma, and chronic health conditions like diabetes as a result of my hardships.

I was born in Tijuana, and raised as a toddler in South Central. At an early age I started running away from a home of alcoholism and depression. That impacted my ability to stay housed.

My life was filled with struggle. The depression ended in having many unhealthy relationships. Domestic violence blanked me out mentally.

Many women are ashamed and do not admit to control and abuse that they suffer, and some find it hard to get the help that they need. When I first reached out for help at a shelter in the 1980s with my two kids, it didn't really work. All of the shelter staff were white. There were no Hispanics or Blacks, and that was really weird for me because I grew up in South Central. And we ended up leaving the shelter because it was just awkward.

I did ultimately find the help that I needed through a domestic violence shelter called the House of Ruth. After our stay there, my kids and I left to housing through Section 8 they gave us, and we lived for 20 years in that housing. I also became a board member with the House of Ruth and found fulfillment in giving back in that way.

For many years, we lived in the Los Feliz community. We felt safe, and my family thrived. My kids were doing well in school, and I had a few jobs. We were comfortable, and we did not have to move around or fear facing eviction.

But then my building was sold, and I couldn't find another owner to rent to me with my voucher, so I ended up back in South Central. And it was very different, just in the same City, but South Central and Los Feliz was such like day and night.

I put my kids in private school through scholarships. But we couldn't escape the violence, the gang-related violence also in the neighborhood. And we were evicted because of a shooting, and my children and I just had to go—everyone had to go wherever they could. We didn't have a plan. We didn't have anything.

I now live in a single-room occupancy in the Skid Row community, and I love Skid Row. It looks very bad and it stinks, but there is so much good also going on in it, and I really love it.

When I got the room, I thought, now I can apply myself to achieve my goals and all that, and I have ended up more depressed than when I was homeless. It was so hard to adjust. Now I am in a room and now I have a place, but in my mind, I wasn't able to focus properly.

I needed more support to heal from my trauma, and I am in the process right now of that. The support that most effectively helped me were the shelters—I love the shelters—the ministries and individuals who came through Skid Row just to be nice and good to the people. That really touched my heart, and that really helped.

I am now at a job with the Downtown Women's Center, a training called LA:RISE where I am a support staff at a social enterprise, and I look forward to graduating the program.

Congress should take many steps to end homelessness and prevent violence against women, including ensure that the HUD budget—okay.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Vizcaino can be found on page 119 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you, Ms. Vizcaino.
Ms. Gallo, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF DORA LEONG GALLO, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS**

Ms. GALLO. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, members of the committee, and the LA Congressional Representatives here today. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Financial Services Committee.

My name is Dora Gallo, and I am the president and CEO of A Community of Friends. We are a nonprofit, community-based development corporation with a very specific focus of ending homelessness for people with mental illness.

It began 30 years ago. Our organization has been developing what is now called, “permanent supportive housing”, long before this particular term was created. By combining affordable housing with services for the most vulnerable in our community, we have ended homelessness for thousands.

In the 30 years that we have been around, we have created 50 apartment buildings throughout Los Angeles and Orange County, including 2 in San Diego. We have 1 building in Representative Waters’ district, we have 3 in Representative Barragan’s district, 1 in Representative Napolitano’s district, and 12 in Representative Gomez’s district. Currently, we house 2,500 adults, including over 600 children.

People who have a chronic disability, such as mental health or addiction, have always been particularly vulnerable to losing their housing. They have limited financial resources, less family support, and they need extensive help and services to exit homelessness. These are the people whom we serve.

As some of you have noted, the recent explosion of homelessness in LA County is not caused by an increase in the number of people with chronic disabilities. Many people are falling into homelessness due to the extreme lack of affordable housing in Los Angeles. And the longer they stay homeless, the more likely they are to develop mental health issues.

Stagnant wages, rising rents, and decades of disinvestment in affordable housing have enabled a heated real estate market to cause havoc on our limited housing supply. Rents are rising faster than renter incomes.

The median monthly asking rent in Los Angeles is now \$2,471, so that means renters in LA need to earn \$47 per hour to afford the median rent. Seventy-nine percent of extremely low-income households in LA are paying more than half of their income for housing.

The supply of affordable rental housing is also not keeping pace with demand. Recent studies show that LA needs over 516,000 more affordable rental units to meet the demand.

In 2018, the City of Los Angeles permitted 27,000 homes, but only 2,900 of them were affordable, 11 percent. And according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there are only 18 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income rental households in this metropolitan area.

So, housing for the lowest income must be available if we are to end homelessness. And for those with chronic disabling conditions, supportive housing, combined with a harm reduction approach, is

the most effective tool to keep people with disabilities from cycling back into homelessness.

No matter where in the community our buildings are located, from the San Fernando Valley to San Pedro, Boyle Heights to Hollywood, Compton to Koreatown, we have found that given an opportunity to live in decent, safe, and affordable housing, people can begin focusing on those other issues that led to their homelessness.

Providing the level of support and services needed to end homelessness for people who have been in the streets for years requires a sustained and long-term commitment. Investments in Federal programs must continue if homelessness is truly to be eradicated.

So we agree with Chairwoman Waters that it is difficult to make significant progress towards ending homelessness in LA without substantial new funding. The citizens of LA have done our part by voting to tax ourselves to provide the resources needed. We need Congress to take action as well.

We commend Chairwoman Waters for introducing H.R. 1856, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019. The \$13 billion proposed would be amongst the most significant investment towards this crisis.

In addition to homeless programs, Congress should continue increasing capital investments to build, preserve, and rehab homes affordable to people with the lowest income, such as Housing Finance Reform related to GSEs. That is an opportunity to increase resources to the National Housing Trust Fund.

We also support efforts to expand and improve the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. In LA, it is used to create supportive housing. So, we urge Congress to support H.R. 3077, the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act, that would expand the housing credit authority by 50 percent. And we urge Congress to continue project-basing rental subsidies to ensure housing affordability, including project-basing HUD-VASH vouchers.

And I want to conclude my remarks by saying that despite the challenges and the scale of the problem, there is hope. LA has a strong community of nonprofit organizations, public officials, business leaders, and private citizens with the passion, skill, and commitment to end homelessness.

Partnering with our congressional leaders, we know we can do this. We don't have a choice.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for holding this hearing and for soliciting our input.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gallo can be found on page 73 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much, Ms. Gallo.

I am now going to recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions. But before I do, I would like to give special recognition to Ms. Jasmine Borrego, who is the president of TELACU Residential Management and Property Management, and thank TELACU for all of the work it is doing for developing low-income housing. Thank you very much.

And I did mention the veterans, but Ms. Akilah Templeton, who is the executive director of U.S. VETS in my district, is doing a fabulous job. Thank you very much for being here.

I see the yellow T-shirts are here today. They are from the Alliance of California for Community Empowerment (ACCE). Thank you very much, ACCE

And Susan Burton, from A New Way of Life, that is transitioning women from incarceration into our communities. Thank you so very, very much. I thank all of you.

Mr. Watkins, of course, I know WLCAC very well. My career has been developed along with the long-time services that have been presented by WLCAC, and I thank you for your leadership. I worked with your father, so you know I know the origins of WLCAC and all that you have contributed.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you.

Chairwoman WATERS. And I am very pleased to hear about even another housing complex that you have developed, the Dolores McCoy Villa Apartments.

I have cut ribbons for you and that organization more than once, and I congratulate you one more time on a project providing housing opportunities for those who certainly would not get them, but for WLCAC or an organization like yours.

You mentioned that sometimes, it is something with public policy that creates homelessness and a lack of opportunity, and I agree with you on that.

And I wanted to ask you if, in fact, being located right adjacent to, and surrounded by, Nickerson Gardens, Jordan Downs, Emperor Courts, and a number of the public housing projects—Guntec Village is also there—have you witnessed those who have been evicted from public housing because of a failed policy that we have in the Federal Government that evicts families sometimes because one member of the family may have gotten into a problem of some kind, trying to return back maybe from incarceration, et cetera? Are you familiar with that policy?

Mr. WATKINS. Absolutely. And to my chagrin, sometimes families in multiple are evicted summarily, and there isn't any clear explanation.

There is an article in either Popular Science or Popular Mechanics—I believe it is Popular Science—where some of their writers went along with the LAPD one night to witness the effectiveness of shock-and-awe tactics. They used explosive devices and bright light to wake families in the middle of the night, and summarily evicted 44 families in one night in Nickerson Gardens.

Despite my efforts, the only source of news on that subject that I was able to find was in that article, and that is one example. I hear too many stories about people being evicted because their child visited them without a permit to park overnight or that the child got into trouble.

But here is the thing. If you are living in the lowest, most affordable—because if you are a billionaire, affordable housing means something different than if you are in the lowest income group. And so, the lowest most affordable housing is what I consider public housing to be, and when you get evicted from that, I know there is nowhere to go.

You will recall that I have talked to you a number of times about who makes up the population downtown. It would be very interesting to find out how the population downtown is made up of peo-

ple who have been evicted from the most affordable low-income housing.

Chairwoman WATERS. And what about an attempt to keep people from sleeping in their cars who had no place else to sleep and taking people's possessions on the street, are you familiar with those policies and what it does to those who have no place else to go and no place to keep their possessions?

Mr. WATKINS. I get criticized because I allow small groups of homeless to live on public property that we own. I get criticized internally and externally, because my risk manager says that this is a liability-prone policy for WLCAC to allow this.

I allow people to come in and freely use showers. We have showers that are available to the general public, and they come in at all hours of the night. So, we don't lock our compound overnight.

But I do get criticized for it because, after all, it isn't legal to allow people to live on a vacant lot.

Meanwhile, I am trying to break ground on a 46-unit compound in Compton, 126 Compton Boulevard, and we have been waiting for months to just get out of the planning process. We get promised week over week over—I just got a message in here today that we are getting told it will be another week before we get the signoff on the plans, yet we have been in there since March.

And this happens all the time. The process, although I grant that it is necessary, it is far from streamlined. It is anything but streamlined.

Chairwoman WATERS. I want to thank you very much.

And I want you to know that I had a town hall meeting recently where I advised the County that you are feeding people the hot lunch program, our seniors, and they are wandering in from all over and sleeping on the ground all over the City, but they are wandering in to be fed.

And so, I am coming out with some representatives from the County so that we can get these seniors off the street, whom you are feeding, in addition to all of the other stuff that you are doing.

Thank you very much.

Mr. WATKINS. Thank you.

Chairwoman WATERS. The Chair now recognizes Representative Brad Sherman from the 30th District of California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. And I want to thank you for holding these hearings in my district and throughout Los Angeles.

Homelessness is the number one problem I hear about. The Federal Government has to do more as far as resources. We have to be more efficient in how we spend them.

But these hearings will also, hopefully, shine a light on local policies that cause rents to be so much higher in Los Angeles than they are in so many cities around the country. The rents are too damn high, but also the wages are too damn low.

We are told that there is a low unemployment rate, but I won't be satisfied until I have a bunch of guys—and it is always guys—in thousand-dollar suits blockading my office and using tactics that some groups in here may occasionally use to say, "Oh, my God, we can't find enough workers," and my response will be, "Have you tried raising the wages?"

Wages have barely kept up with inflation, and they have never kept up with the inflation and the cost of housing in metropolitan areas.

One issue that comes up, and this could be controversial, is how large should a unit be? In Europe and in Japan, each person, even middle class and wealthy people, have smaller units per the number of people living there. If it was our option and our choice, we would want to provide every homeless person, every housing endangered person with a traditional American mini-mansion or as many square feet as we could.

But I will ask, first, Ms. Gallo, but maybe Mr. Watkins or others would comment as well, are we being prevented from building units? The Japanese have been forerunners in how to make people comfortable in less square footage. Is that even legal?

Ms. GALLO. It is actually legal. The building codes actually are quite lenient as it relates to size of a particular apartment that is eligible to be occupied. I will tell you that the building codes require 120 square feet for one person and an additional 70 feet for every additional person. So, it can be small.

Mr. SHERMAN. It can be done.

Ms. GALLO. And that is one reason you have seen some cities promoting microunits, what we call studios, 300 square feet, 325 square feet.

What I would caution, though, is to make sure that whatever size unit we are proposing, that it is appropriate for the people living in there for long-term sustainability. If it is too small, and someone gets stable in housing over time, and starts to accumulate things, then they can become dissatisfied with the size of the apartment. So it does require thought, but it can be done.

Mr. SHERMAN. Has anyone else had difficulties being able to site a unit? I know there are neighborhoods in this country where if you try to put more than four houses on an acre, the NIMBYs rise up. Mr. Watkins?

Mr. WATKINS. Housing policy demands—and you all know about this—ADA compliance. ADA compliance oftentimes makes a project near impossible to plan and complete. But more often than not, it is all of the provisions for square footage within a certain footprint of land.

And we have been trying to put forth a project to build 1,000 single occupancy units. We are not sure how far we are going to get, but we think that would be a good response for people coming out of homelessness by way of incarceration. So, we are planning that as we speak.

I don't know if I answered your question. Those are going to be small units, single occupancy.

Mr. SHERMAN. I only have 40 seconds left, so I yield back.

Chairwoman Waters. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragan.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Thank you.

First, I want to start by thanking you, Ms. Gallo, for your work in my district. I know you have four sites there. Thank you very much for that work.

Mr. Watkins, since the first day that I was a Member of Congress, I reached out and we had an opportunity to talk, and I have learned a lot about the work that you are doing in Watts and in the greater community. I want to thank you for that work. We have actually done a number of events at the Watts Labor Community Action Committee where you have your location.

I want to talk a little bit about seniors who are experiencing homelessness. The rising housing costs, compounded by insufficient retirement income and life's calamities, are driving more seniors into Los Angeles streets. In LA County alone, senior homelessness spiked 22 percent in 2018. Nationally, only one of every three seniors is eligible for housing assistance because housing programs receive inadequate funding to meet existing growing need.

Can you talk a little bit about what unique needs older adults have, from your experience, and how well it is that the homelessness services system can help set them so they can get out of homelessness quickly? And maybe share some feedback for us on what Congress can be doing to help the situation, to better serve this population.

Mr. WATKINS. We are one of the largest senior service providers in the City, and we have—I don't just say this to blow smoke—the best crew, the best staff, and the best leadership for that work.

And my director, Phyllis Willis, is an absolute expert who is putting input, policy input to the City and the County of Los Angeles on how we should deal with not only the problem of homelessness, but seniors who can't get into our places because they are raising children. Oftentimes they have second- and third-generation children that they are responsible for and can't get out to get the services that we provide. So we will go to them.

But I think the single largest impediment to seniors availing themselves of the services that are available is information, information that makes them aware of what the possibilities are—where do they go, what do they ask for, what can they ask for—and that number is so much larger than the number that we actually serve. And I have to think that that is at least the underbelly of part of that beast.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Right. The other thing I want to touch quickly on, and I know that you are doing a lot of work on this, can you share some of what you are doing in the community to make sure the homeless population will be counted in the census? Because we know that could have a disastrous impact on funding for services and programs.

Can you talk a little bit about what you are doing in the community that maybe we can all hear about and learn about?

Mr. WATKINS. Certainly. As I said, we are building low-income affordable housing. When I say low income, I mean very low income. We have been very low-income affordable housing providers for 54 years with nearly 1,000 units within 5 minutes of our headquarters in Watts.

I said we want to build 1,000 single occupancy units. But we have hundreds more that now need to be rebuilt, that need to be rehabbed. And the problem with doing that again is the bureaucratic process and what it costs to make a project work.

But as far as what we are doing to address the problem, I know this afternoon I have a meeting with a gentleman who specializes in container housing.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Right.

Mr. WATKINS. And when we thought about doing container housing 15 years ago, we were told that it would never make it past the City Council because it appears as though it is warehousing human beings.

We think that container housing is a solution that Congressman Sherman spoke about when he talked about small spaces. Container housing can be affordable. It can be completely comfortable with built-in furnishings. It can be made available to people in large numbers without needing to build it into the ground.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Right. Do you want to comment on the census, to making sure everybody counts in the homeless population counting for the census?

Mr. WATKINS. Yes. Every year we participate in that, and our site is a hub where literally, I don't know, 80, 90 people go out into the community and count. And they have to be very adept at getting under the freeway overpasses, down into the canals, and like I mentioned earlier, who is living under someone's home.

It is a difficult proposition, but it is also made more difficult with the current administrative policy of targeting people who have questionable documentation, and that hurts us. That hurts Watts tremendously. For a community that is 75 percent Hispanic/Latino, we can't even fathom what is going to happen when people who just refuse to be counted are left out of the congressional distribution of resources.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Thank you for your work.

And I yield back.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles has arrived. We are going to continue with our last two questioners, our Members of Congress, and then some of the discussion that has been going on about what is happening in the City, I think will be addressed in the Mayor's testimony.

So, Mr. Mayor, we just have two more Members who will be asking questions, and then you are on. Thank you very much.

And now, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I am, to a certain extent, grateful that I was born into poverty, and I say this because for a good deal of my life, I saw life from the bottom up, as opposed to the top down. And when you see life from the bottom up, you learn the true meaning of, "But for the grace of God, there go I."

I arrived early enough to visit what is known as Skid Row. I find that name distasteful, by the way. But I visited Skid Row, and I will tell you that people who talk about this problem based upon what we have read cannot truly appreciate the human tragedy unless you see what is happening on what we call Skid Row.

It was my misfortune and the misfortune of at least one person for me to be there today because I literally passed a person who had died on the street. I am told that this is not an unusual occur-

rence and that it doesn't happen all the time, but it happens too often.

I saw people who were homeless, but also, you could sense the hopelessness. You could sense the feeling of, "Society has abandoned me."

It really is a human tragedy of the highest magnitude. And I appreciate what all of you are trying to do to resolve it and to help us. I appreciate what the City is trying to do. I appreciate the County. But in the final analysis, we have to get more people involved who understand, "But for the grace of God, there go I."

Unfortunately, Mr. Watkins, we have a person at the highest office in this land who, in my opinion, does not appreciate, "But for the grace of God, there go I."

I think that if I could have a wish that would not cause me to find my way to the gates of hell, it would be that the President could live one day on Skid Row. I think he would have a different appreciation for the human tragedy that he, as Commander-in-Chief, should have a greater sense of responsibility for aiding and assisting and resolving.

So, I thank you. I wanted to let you know that I appreciate all of you for what you are doing.

Ms. AL-MANSOUR, you mentioned testing. Explain again—you explained it to a limited extent—how important this is in dealing with invidious discrimination, because it is much more pervasive than a good many people would think. Because if you live your life from the top down, you don't see all of the suffering that we who have seen it from the bottom up can appreciate. Would you kindly explain testing again?

MS. AL-MANSOUR. Yes. Testing is basically an undercover measure that fair housing organizations use to determine if there is evidence to show that there was any discrimination in applying for a rental unit or applying for a home or a home loan. In Los Angeles, we do primarily rental testing at the Housing Rights Center.

For somebody who is disabled or elderly, who maybe has children, oftentimes they know they have been discriminated against when they apply for an apartment or if they are being evicted because they have asked for reasonable accommodation, and it has been denied. They asked for a caregiver or a support animal or a change in rules.

Maybe they get their Social Security benefits on the 3rd, but the rent is due on the 1st, so they keep getting late fees, which is setting them up for eviction. So it is very obvious, that discrimination.

It is very obvious when a family is told, "Your children can't play outside. You are going to be evicted if your children come outside and make too much noise." Again, that is an obvious form of discrimination.

Race discrimination is not so obvious. Today, most landlords don't say, I don't want you because you are Black, Latino, or something else.

And oftentimes, a tenant who is applying or an applicant doesn't know that they have been discriminated against. So we send similarly situated people in different categories—it could be race, sexual orientation, a lot of different categories—to go apply for that apartment and let us know, how much were you told the rent

would be? Were you given an incentive? Were you told you had to move out early, and so forth?

It is very prevalent, and it happens every day, and unfortunately, most people never know they have been discriminated against.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you.

I will yield back the balance of my time. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Garcia.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. And again, I am so appreciative of your efforts to have this hearing and to bring such a great panel together that are the direct providers on the ground.

And while I regret that I won't be able to spend the afternoon with some of you to see some of your programs, please know that I truly appreciate all of the work that you are doing.

And when I listened to my colleague from Houston talk about growing up from the bottom up, it kind of reminded me of some of my own story. People have often asked me, how did it feel growing up poor, and I just simply tell them it felt great. I didn't know any better.

But I am glad that you all are there working with people to make sure that you can give them some inspiration, working with them so that they can each feel their comfort zone and feel their comfort level of what space they need in terms of housing because, obviously, we know that some folks don't want to be pushed into a house, don't want to be pushed out of underneath that house. There is a certain level of making sure that we know what the individual needs and wants.

Mr. Haynes, first of all, thank you for sharing your story. When you look at this issue, what is your best advice to someone about transitioning, and how do you approach them? What can we learn from you, who has transitioned, in terms of helping others to transition, if they choose to?

Mr. HAYNES. The most important thing is to really listen to what they are saying. We might ask them a question, but we are not going to really listen to the answer.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Right.

Mr. HAYNES. We are just going to tell them this is what we have and expect them to make do with what is being offered when it is really not what they need.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. We need to let them make their own choices?

Mr. HAYNES. Yes.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you for that.

Ms. Vizcaino, you mentioned the domestic violence situations of women, and you also mentioned, I think, some about veterans. I know from some of my work in Texas serving on the Veterans Committee in the State Senate that there are more minority women, Black and Brown, who are going into the service than ever before.

So what specific needs or challenges do we have for that population that we need to try to be mindful of as we consider the funding challenges not only locally, but federally?

Ms. VIZCAINO. That is a good question. I am not sure what the answer is to that. Just have more hearings and meetings and let it be brought to the table, the specific needs of the women, because it is not like a generalized thing. Each one is an individual, personalized case, and so it is hard to just like assembly-line everyone, whether it be women, men, or veterans.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Ms. Gallo, do you have any suggestions? And I was wondering, too, because as I said earlier, I started as a social worker, then I was a Legal Aid lawyer, so I have dealt with a lot of poverty issues throughout my career.

And it seems like there are more women and children in the homeless population, at least that I have seen in Houston, and from the data, it shows that there is an increase. It used to just be an individual male.

Ms. GALLO. Right, right.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Now, we are seeing more women and children. So is there any—again, a similar question as I asked Ms. Vizcaino, are there any different issues that we need to address that are specific to that population?

Ms. GALLO. Yes. I think Ms. Hartman also had made some references to this in terms of the specialized needs of women, both women unaccompanied, as well as women in the military service. I think frequently when we talk about individuals and families, we are doing exactly that and not focusing on the particular needs of women.

I think you are right in noticing an increase. We started serving families or even women in early 2000. When we first started 30 years ago, we were focusing on individuals and mostly males. And then, we started noticing women out on the streets more often.

And one of the things that we noticed immediately is the level of trauma that they are encountering. and the reasons that led to their homelessness; in many cases, it was related to domestic violence or intimate partner relationships, and as Ms. Vizcaino said, the hesitancy of talking about it.

So it takes a long time to figure out what the issue is. You understand the homeless status, but building that trust and providing that level of services and the mental health support for an individual, for a female to talk about what led to their homelessness, that is an additional level of support that we don't quite push and focus on in the beginning of the services program. But I think we are starting to do that with some of the recognition and noticing the increases that have come out for women who are homeless.

But trauma is a big part of it and then recognizing the safety issues related to their discussion of their past histories with domestic violence and intimate partner relationships.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you.

And thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and I yield back.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

I would like to thank our second panel of witnesses for their testimony here today.

And I would like to say a very special thanks to Ms. Vizcaino and Mr. Haynes for coming here and telling your stories. And to our panel of witnesses here today, it is your work that causes Mr. Haynes and Ms. Vizcaino to be here today to talk about how their lives have been changed.

So, everybody give a big round of applause to our second panel of witnesses.

We will now pause for a minute to set up our third panel for today's hearing. And Mr. Mayor, it is all yours.

[brief recess]

Chairwoman WATERS. While we have a few people greeting the Mayor, I would like to thank Ms. Rachel Sunday, President and CEO of the Power of a Shower that is based in Playa del Rey; and, of course, Ms. Lori Gay, President and CEO of the Neighborhood Housing Services of LA County; Reverend Omar Muhammad, Faithful Central Bible Church; and of course, we have here representatives from the Love Mission, Community Development Incorporated, and People Helping People.

A round of applause additionally for those who are involved with assisting with our homelessness crisis.

If I could get you to take your seats now, I would appreciate it.

I would now like to welcome our final witness for today's hearing, the Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles. As you know, Mayor Garcetti is the 42nd Mayor of Los Angeles and has served as Mayor since 2013.

Mr. Mayor, we welcome you, and I thank you for the opportunity that you afforded to me and other Members of Congress to visit with you recently while you helped to help us understand exactly what you are doing and what other assistance could be helpful in what you are attempting to do.

So with that, Mr. Mayor, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to present your oral testimony.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ERIC GARCETTI, MAYOR,
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

Mr. GARCETTI. Thank you so much, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you for your friendship, thank you for your leadership, and thank you for your presence here.

It is not the first time we have testified together in Exposition Park, but whenever Maxine Waters is in Exposition Park on an important subject, I am there. And this is the most important of all of the subjects I have ever come before you to talk about.

And I am so grateful for you to have two Tejanos here, Thank you to Representative Green and Representative Garcia for your lived experience and your perspective.

And my dear friend Brad Sherman, who represents my hometown in the San Fernando Valley, thank you, too, for being a part of this.

I come before you today as a mayor, as a parent, as a foster parent, as a volunteer and organizer, and as a long-time activist on the issue of homelessness. Representative Green, when you were talking about Skid Row, I started when I was 14 on Skid Row, something that predated even my birth by decades as a place where we deposited our social ills and trauma.

And I sometimes think about what the 14-year-old Eric Garcetti would tell the 48-year-old Eric Garcetti if he could talk to him about how far we have come and how far we have not come.

I am asked all the time what causes homelessness, and I am sure you have had great testimony. I am the last panel, I guess, a panel of one. You are probably a little bit tired, probably a little bit hungry, and probably a little bit depressed hearing some of the things that you have heard today. But I hope to give you a perspective to kind of give you some hope and some belief that this is a human-caused problem that ultimately can be a human-solved problem as well.

There is no issue I work on more than this. And I have brought together mayors across the country on this issue. Mayors, ironically, have little direct power over the causes and the cures of homelessness.

We have police forces, we have sanitation departments or bureaus, but you can't clean or arrest your way out of homelessness. When it comes to building housing, preventing evictions, when we come to the most simple way to explain where homelessness comes from, I say it is unaffordable housing meets trauma.

That trauma may be the manifestation of veterans coming home from war and the horrors of war; women, 91 percent of whom on Skid Row are the survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence; children who emancipate out of a foster care system; mental health that has gone untreated; substance abuse issues; low wages.

These things are different in each person, but some combination of all of those pieces of trauma are shared by everybody. It might be just economic trauma for some.

The good news here in Los Angeles is, we don't come to this conversation saying, "Wow, we have a crisis. Please figure it out for us." We come, as you heard today, from a place that the recent national conference for the Coalition to End Homelessness brought together saying LA is now seen as the model.

And I have this conversation with people a lot. Well, I guess the plan isn't working because homelessness in the County went up 12 percent, or in the City 16 percent, in a State where the counties, on average, went up 35 percent this last year alone.

One of the things I point out, though, is that this isn't about whether a model is working now. It is about whether we have the resources to actually fuel that model to success.

In military terms, I served in the Navy for 12½ years, and you can have the best-trained people and equipment, but if you don't have scale, you will be defeated eventually, even by folks who have less than you do.

And it is an interesting thing. To stay with that metaphor, today people demand, and rightfully so and impatiently so when they see the horrors on the streets of America in our worst places where there are homeless, you see folks who want us to have D-Day, a conquering of Europe, and the Marshall Plan all overnight.

So one of my first points would be we have to extinguish that belief and get rid of that fantasy that there is some magic formula that within a few weeks or months, this will disappear, that we can ship people off to this place over in the desert or on the beach or

create a massive tent and just move them away. That is not how this gets done.

But on the other extreme, I want you to hear that it is time to get rid of the cynical hopelessness that we can't solve this problem, and I will give you a couple of cases of how I have that faith in my bones.

In just 4 years of addressing this problem here in Los Angeles, we have doubled the success that we have in the number of people that we house. And statistics are tough, because they can cut both ways, but statistics really are stories. Numbers are really narratives of real people.

I spend a lot of time on the streets with outreach teams. Yesterday, I was walking the Los Angeles River talking to folks who are living in tents, hearing their lived experience, trying to take my power as Mayor, saying, this is the day you should come home. You should go out of homelessness.

And we went from 9,000 people being housed a year to 21,300 last year. Now if you told me that 4 years ago, I would say we are on our way home to solving homelessness.

You all are public policy folks. It is rare to get that kind of success where in a short period of time you can double that.

Put on top of those 21,000, the 27,000 who found their own way out of homelessness. So last year, 48,000 real people in the County of Los Angeles moved from homelessness into homes. But 54,000 new people went into homelessness.

So when we see an increase, it is not that the success isn't working. It is that we don't have the scale, and we are not preventing it from happening in the first place.

Second point, the Federal Government has to be a part of this. And I know I am preaching to the converted with the four of you, but back in the 1980s when the Federal Government started to step up on homelessness, when I was first becoming an activist on this, it made a difference.

We calculated between State cuts—which aren't the responsibility of the folks here from Texas, nor our Members of Congress here—which got rid of our redevelopment dollars, and Federal cuts to our affordable housing dollars—we calculated this—\$20 billion of affordable housing over the last decade disappeared.

In other words, if we had just kept the level of funding from 10 years ago, about 20,000 people's worth of housing would have been put in LA County, enough for us not to have gone up, but probably to have reduced homelessness.

I see the red light is on, so I will try to wrap things up. But let me leave you with two things.

First, this is a public health crisis. New data that just came out said those who are unhoused versus those who are in shelter, those who are out on the streets versus those in the shelters, are 25 times more likely to have triple morbidity of substance abuse, mental health, and physical health problems. If we think this is only a housing problem, we need to make sure that the health issues are there.

Second, when the Federal Government stepped up for our veterans, here in Los Angeles we housed more homeless veterans than anywhere in the country. We had more to begin with, but we re-

duced by 80 percent the number of veterans. In fact, we have housed double the number that we started with. There just are the 20 percent left because of the new folks who are coming out onto the street every single day.

And third, we have to look at prevention. It is time to pass Maxine Waters' Ending Homelessness Act now.

And I will say this last thing to our President because you invoked our Commander-in-Chief. I retired from the Navy, so he is not in my chain of command militarily anymore. But when he was in Japan recently, he said a few words about this City and about San Francisco.

He said the streets were so clean in Tokyo. Nobody was homeless. He said it is disgusting, or whatever words he used, in my City and in San Francisco, and he said he might have to do something about it. He said this problem started 2 years ago.

In my response—and I know we are just supposed to punch our political opponents back—I didn't. I said any day the Commander-in-Chief of this country is talking about homelessness is an opportunity and a good day.

And I said, if he is really willing to come to Skid Row and walk that walk, maybe not spend the night, but walk that walk, or have us come to the White House and bring a coalition of independent Republican and Democratic mayors who struggle with this issue across America, and he wants to save lives, we will call his bluff on that, and we will say we can save lives together.

I told him this problem didn't start 2 years ago when he became President, and it didn't start 6 years ago when I became mayor. This has been the legacy of too many decades of neglect, but it is on our watch to end it. And Washington, D.C., must and will, with your success, be a part of that solution.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mayor Garcetti can be found on page 78 of the appendix.]

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor.

I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes to raise a few questions with you.

I am very pleased about your support of my legislation. We developed this legislation understanding that \$13 billion was going to raise some eyebrows, but we believe if we are to end homelessness, we have to supply the resources to apply to the problem.

Having said that, I wanted to ask you a little bit about your budget. In addition to the Federal money that you receive from Washington, D.C., and the grants that we give to all of the States and Cities, there was an initiative that was passed, I believe it was HHH—

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes, correct.

Chairwoman WATERS. —where you received additional resources. And I know that you have put those resources to work. I am interested in one aspect of that right now, and that is the transitional housing, which I think is extremely exciting, and you showed us an example of it on the screen. And I want to know how many have you developed, how many are you going to develop, and will that include South Central or South Los Angeles?

Mr. GARCETTI. Absolutely, it will, including in your district, Chairwoman.

It is interesting that you talk about the \$13 billion, which shouldn't raise eyebrows. It is a sad commentary when we think \$13 billion will raise eyebrows when the City and County together through Measures HHH and H have raised about \$4.5 billion in housing money and services money.

And we are 3 percent of the nation's population. If you do the math, we should have \$120 billion just to match what we have raised locally.

So your ambition is not only impressive, it should be looked at as a start, because if you match just what LA has done, the Federal Government would be putting in \$120 billion. Now, not every community has homelessness equal to ours, so if you looked at the homeless population, maybe it would be \$40 billion or \$50 billion.

But, yes, we have two measures that passed. HHH is for Los Angeles City itself, the largest housing measure in U.S. history to pass by a vote of the voters.

It leverages about \$5 billion worth of housing from people looking at shipping containers and new innovative ways to do it cheaper and faster, to traditional, really beautifully-built apartments for folks who have the deepest need and perhaps sometimes the triple diagnosis that I mentioned before and will need to have services for the rest of their lives.

We have 110 projects of permanent housing. And on the transitional housing side, we have 25 transitional housing shelters that we are looking to open up in this next 12 months, 4 of which are already open.

In South Los Angeles, we have, I would say, almost a preponderance of those, including in the former animal services yard next to where we had an unused kind of dog park. It is going to be opening up in about a month, month and a half.

We have a group of engineers, architects, and builders, who, almost like a war room, manage and we can get up in 60 days span tents, right now, that have cubicles where people can have their own beds. It is a new model where people can bring their pets, their partners, and their property, which is why people have been shelter-resistant in the past.

My personal wish, though we don't know where the money will come from—though if this passes, we could—is to double the number to about 50. That would give us at that point somewhere around 3,000 to 4,000 beds, which would turn over every, let's say, 6 months or so. So you are looking at every year almost 9,000 to 10,000 people being served. Put that in for a few years, and we could not only make a dent in homelessness, but we might have a chance of ending street homelessness in LA.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

I was interviewed on KJLH the day before yesterday, I believe, and Dominique DiPrima, whom you are familiar with, had an idea, and I told her I would share it with you.

Mr. GARCETTI. Great.

Chairwoman WATERS. She thinks that you should buy up some of the motels that are problematic in the community and convert

those into housing, and she didn't identify whether it is transitional or permanent supportive housing, or what have you.

But I thought it was a pretty good idea, particularly if those motels are presenting us with a problem that causes you to have to use resources to respond to complaints and violence, or any of that.

Is that something that you have thought about or you could or what would you tell Dominique DiPrima?

Mr. GARCETTI. I would say, "Dominique, you are one of the smartest people I know," and all of her ideas are good.

We are moving on motels. We need a little bit of State help to change the residency, that there is a maximum of 29 days, so that we can take existing motels today and just do leases on them while we are looking for money to buy motels.

Now, we have to get the owners to do it, where we have had problematic ones. They are far and few between that they are ready to seize, but absolutely, that is part of it.

We, in fact, had tens of millions of dollars lined up through the Salvation Army and some other folks to do just that, and those monies, unfortunately, fell through for the developer that was going to do this.

But we will not be deterred. I think those motels are a twofer: get rid of blight; and at the same time, have a great place to put housing right now. So we do expect a number of those—San Fernando Valley, there are some in South LA, as well—in the next 12 months or so to come online.

Chairwoman WATERS. Well, you certainly have a friend in Governor Newsom—

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes, we do.

Chairwoman WATERS. —who is doing everything that he can to be of help.

With that, I will recognize Representative Sherman for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. GARCETTI. Hello, Representative Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mayor, thanks for being here. And thanks for your dedication to this problem.

We pass a lot of laws in Congress, we repeal some, but we cannot repeal the law of supply and demand.

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. We need more units. We especially need more rental units. It is best if we can get the construction of affordable units. Even if we get luxury units built, somebody is moving in there who would otherwise be in a non-luxury unit.

I want to focus on the fiscalization of land use planning where our system for financing government—and government needs money, but it is important how you raise the money.

If you wanted to build an auto dealership, I have a dozen Cities in this County that would give you free land, and the Mayor will come in and help you not just cut the ribbon, they will help you build.

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. And on the other hand, if you want to build housing, you pay an impact fee.

You may have seen the headline in the Los Angeles Times, stating that one reason housing is so expensive in California is that cities and counties charge high developer fees. So what do we do so that we finance government based on ability to pay, which the State income tax being a good way to measure that and instead, we finance based upon whether you are building something that the City Government has to provide police and fire protection for?

Mr. GARCETTI. Absolutely. As somebody who led on tax policy on the Board of Equalization, and as a tax lawyer, it is a great question from you, Representative.

A couple of things. One, between impact fees—and I do believe that 40 years after Tom Bradley first proposed it, we did pass a linkage fee, which says if you are building luxury housing, just like we do for parks and other things, you do have to put money aside for affordable housing. And I think that will raise as much as \$100 million or \$100 million worth of subsidized low-income housing out of that with the building boom we are having.

But you are right. You can't keep putting everything on developers. But between getting nothing done by having no fees on them and having fees, there is something in between that enough cities don't use, which is the power of zoning. It doesn't cost you anything, but it can produce more housing, and then you can ask for something in exchange.

Mr. SHERMAN. At a minimum, I hope you would join me—and this is a State matter—in trying to get the sales tax that is generated by building, because you have all of the—

Mr. GARCETTI. Of course, the materials.

Mr. SHERMAN. —building materials allocated to the city where the building takes place, rather than where the warehouse for the building supplies is located.

I do want to point out that we are focused on homelessness, but I think there was general agreement before you got here, that the rents are too damn high.

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. And it is not just for the homeless.

Mr. GARCETTI. Correct.

Mr. SHERMAN. The homelessness is the tip of the iceberg, and the homelessness we see is the tip of that iceberg. But for every homeless person, there are so many who could get evicted tomorrow. And they may never get evicted, but they are losing stomach lining today because they could be evicted tomorrow.

There are people cutting back on their medicines. There are people going to payday lenders to be able to make the—there are people who are 1 month delinquent and paying a late fee, and they will somehow stay in their unit. And we have to do everything possible to build more housing, and the more affordable that housing is, the better.

I want to focus—you and I, I think, are going to be together in Chatsworth tomorrow, where there was the old LA Times plant.

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Now, it is going to be, in part, housing. And you had to sweep aside some problems for that to happen because the land was zoned industrial.

But what can we do on a systemic level to make sure that if you want to build affordable housing and rentable housing, you can do it regardless of zoning restrictions? I can see that you might not want one unit among a bunch of factories.

Mr. GARCETTI. Sure.

Mr. SHERMAN. But what can be done to say yes to those who want to build the rental housing—

Mr. GARCETTI. That is where I was headed.

Mr. SHERMAN. —without the Mayor having to intervene?

Mr. GARCETTI. Of course. And it shouldn't require political leadership because mayors change and councils change, and things like that. So, we have changed the zoning.

We are investing in 15 new rail lines in Los Angeles, the biggest program of a city in U.S. history, thanks also to the voters of Measure M.

What we started doing already along those transit lines—and there will be one in the Northwest San Fernando Valley around CSUN—is we have said, if you are close to transit and genuinely big transit stops—

Mr. SHERMAN. Let me point out that in other parts of the City, you are close to a subway or rails or a grade-separated rail. And only in the San Fernando Valley do you call it transit because you have a bus stop. But we will talk about that one.

Mr. GARCETTI. Well, you and I have. And we made sure that the valley where I am from was not written out of that this last time. So, we look forward to equitable treatment there.

But what we have done is we said you can go higher and denser around transit if you build affordable housing on your own dime. It is not a linkage fee, so it is not additional costs. It is an additional opportunity and an additional benefit.

And half of the housing now in Los Angeles City is coming through this one change, fully half of it. And Los Angeles is building 75 percent of all of the housing in LA County, and we are just 40 percent of the population.

So your point about those neighboring cities and towns, nobody can afford to say no and then say where does homelessness come from if you are not willing to build housing in your own neighborhoods, and affordable housing as well.

And to your rent piece as well, at the State level, I hope that the State legislature will pass, and I know the Governor will sign, 1482, which is an anti-rent gouging ordinance, which says you cannot raise rents 25, 50 percent.

Mr. SHERMAN. And I do want to put in one other thing. We may or may not get split roll, but if we get split roll, it has to be tied to ending fees at least for rental housing.

Mr. GARCETTI. Absolutely.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

I now recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. And I thank the Mayor for appearing.

Mr. GARCETTI. Thank you.

Mr. GREEN. Mayor, for simply edification purposes, while you may appear to be alone, it is happening in Houston also.

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. It is happening in Washington, D.C. And the numbers are growing for various and sundry reasons.

One question for me to take to my constituents and persons who are interested in this in an acute way would be, what can we do to prevent—while we are not where you are, but we are headed in your direction, what should we do now to take preventive measures?

Mr. GARCETTI. Three things, and thank you for that question. First, restore at least to previous levels the housing funding from the Federal Government and pass this measure that Chairwoman Waters put forward.

Second, put up assistance for eviction, legal assistance. Fund that. We are doing that out of dollars we don't really even have. But I know, Representative Garcia, you talked about being a Legal Aid lawyer. We are seeing—most landlords are good, but the unscrupulous ones have a disproportionately bad impact on your neighborhoods, and so we are giving legal assistance to folks who are threatened with eviction, who often face language barriers and poverty barriers and other things.

And third, have a mental health system that isn't Stage 4 intervention. If you really want to understand the folks on the street, not the people in the cars, necessarily, but in the shelters who are equally struggling and could become those folks on the street, but with the deep mental health needs, we wait until somebody is Stage 4.

And if the four of us came into the emergency room with a substance abuse issue or a deep mental health problem, I bet none of the four of us would be seen, maybe one. If the four of us came in with broken legs, we will be treated anywhere in America. It is reprehensible that in this country at this time we wait until we are basically at Stage 4.

And as you said, people are dying on our streets before we intervene with the right to mental healthcare in this City. When I walked that river yesterday, 9 out of 10, if not 10 out of the 10 people I spoke to, you could just see have mental health problems that are going untreated.

And if you expect this just to be cleaned up by a bunch of folks who are going to bring either police officers or sanitation workers, that isn't going to happen. It has to be that at the same time we put housing in.

And what I didn't finish with the President is, I found out that in Japan, where he said homelessness doesn't exist, it did a few years ago. A lot of seniors were homeless on the streets, and treated terribly in Japan. They were ashamed of it and shuttled away.

And guess what the Japanese government did? They put forward housing assistance and income assistance and there are not homeless people on those streets of Japan anymore. This is about putting those resources in place on mental health, on income, and treating these things earlier.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mayor.

Additional question. I don't want you to put yourself at risk by answering this question, but if you had the resources—you have

mentioned resources—what are we talking about and over what period of time?

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. If you had the necessary resources, how much and then over what period of time before you would give us what results?

Mr. GARCETTI. I remind people that those of us who are veterans are not different from non-veterans. We are as diverse as the non-veteran population, and that in 4 years we could reduce by 80 percent the veteran population in all of our complexity.

It shows that if you had the resources, you could make a sizeable dent in 5 years, and you could end street homelessness in 10 years. But will people have the will to do that?

And back to the Marshall Plan, will we build something to never let this happen again? So that when we see that day in Los Angeles, in Houston, and other places where homelessness comes down, will we have a system to catch people early, the mental health indicators, people being released from prison? There are great Federal changes, but is there a plan for these people?

I say that in all seriousness because here in California, those of us who supported criminal justice reform, we saw a lot of people come out of our jails and prisons, but there was nobody to meet them and greet them and train them for a job and give them the substance abuse or mental health counseling they needed.

So if they were in prison because they had a gram of something too much and went away for 20 years, they have never had that problem dealt with, and 3 weeks later, they are using again on the streets, and they are living in a tent. And they might be breaking into cars to feed that habit.

We can do better. So, it is also put that in place. But I think a decade is what we are talking about.

Mr. GREEN. Finally, and this is probably at a different level for us to take up, perhaps at a later time, but we have a circumstance wherein about 1 percent of the people hold about 40 percent of the wealth, and the top 20 percent, hold about 90 percent of the wealth.

And I marvel at how we have been conditioned to believe that this is normal, this is the way it should be, that people at the very top should have enough wealth such that they alone could fund solutions.

Mayor, I am not going to ask you to get into the distribution of wealth, but—

Mr. GARCETTI. I am always happy to do that.

Mr. GREEN. —with the top 20 percent holding 90 percent of the wealth, is this a factor in this homelessness problem—and many others as well—but in the homelessness problem?

Mr. GARCETTI. Unquestionably. This is the biggest income gap and the biggest wealth gap we have had since the Great Depression. I say that as often as I can because this second gilded age feels like a lot of fun if you are doing well. There has never been a better time to be in cities in terms of the culture and the museums and the food and everything else.

But even the successful cities have a deep underclass, and the other cities are being completely left behind. That is not what this country is. It is not who we are.

When people get scared about redistribution, I always say forget about what is being taken away. What is the cost to you to drive through your own City and to see people living on the sidewalks and in tents? What is the cost to you when you tell me, your Mayor, to clean that up?

Fifty thousand dollars a person at a time, and we won't do something to control our rents or do something to give people a little bit of assistance for 6 months so they can make that rent. That is what is perversely wrong in this moment.

But I appreciate your voice and the voice of these Members to make sure that we don't forget there are structural reasons that we have a homelessness problem in Los Angeles and across this nation.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Madam Chairwoman, I yield back.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

I now recognize the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Garcia.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, again. And thank you, Mr. Mayor, for being here today.

Mr. GARCETTI. Thank you.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Your presence here today is a strong indicator of your concerns and your sentiments on this issue.

I want to focus on something that several of the other speakers talked about, but no question has really come up that directly addresses it. I have had some real concerns, even in my own City, about the criminalization of homelessness.

In addition to being from the same City and both being lawyers, my colleague, Representative Green, and I here at the table, are both former judges. And in lower jurisdiction courts, he saw a lot of landlord-tenant cases. I saw a lot of what I call tickets that are criminalizing behavior that really need to be addressed with proper treatment and care.

And when I look at what some cities have done in having ordinances against camping or sleeping in cars or feeding of folks in public spaces, taking property that they have with them, there is just—I could go on and on.

I just don't see where that gets us, and quite frankly, I don't like hardly any of these at all. I don't think that it solves any problem. I think it just creates more because all you are doing is incarcerating them. They stay there a little while, then they go back, and it is back to the same situation.

I was raised Catholic, and I was told very early on in my growing ages that we are all God's children. And I was also taught to follow the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you want them to do unto you."

I ask you the question, quite candidly, and I hope you don't take offense—

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes, sure.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. —but if you lost your job today and lost your house and lost everything and became homeless, would this

be the way you would want to be treated, to get a ticket because you were sleeping in a car—

Mr. GARCETTI. That is right.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. —or not being able to just have your own space somewhere that you can call your own?

Mr. GARCETTI. That is right. No, of course not. And thank you, Representative Garcia. First of all, welcome to LA.

There is a double heartbreak going on—

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. GARCETTI. There is a double heartbreak that is going on right now. One is the number—

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. GARCETTI. One is the number of people—

Chairwoman WATERS. Please refrain from interfering with the testimony.

Mr. GARCETTI. The double heartbreak is, one, seeing so many people who are brothers and sisters on the streets and in cars and in shelters.

The second is the loss of—

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. I'm sorry. I am really having trouble—could you get closer?

Mr. GARCETTI. Sure. There is a double heartbreak that is going on in many American cities, and I think Los Angeles is one. First and foremost, it is the sheer number of people who are now living on the streets, in cars, and in shelters.

But second is also—

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Right. But how does giving them a ticket solve the problem?

Mr. GARCETTI. No. I am going to get to that. I hear you loud and clear.

But the second one is the death of public space in many communities where there is a second heartbreak that goes on every time somebody comes off of an offramp or walks through a park or is on the sidewalk.

I do agree with you. And we are looking at an amnesty of all of those low offenses that have been built up through past Administrations and past years of those infractions here in Los Angeles.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Well, if you give them amnesty, that means they still stay on the books because—

Mr. GARCETTI. No, and to expunge.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. So you would actually repeal all of those ordinances?

Mr. GARCETTI. Correct. And that is what I would like to see be done.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Excuse me, Mayor. But when would that be done?

Mr. GARCETTI. Our City Attorney is an independently elected individual, so we are working with the City Attorney's office, but to me, it can't happen soon enough.

And our police chief has announced that as well. So it has the backing of our police department, which I think we are the largest city in America to have said that and to have done that. So we are ready to go as soon as our City Attorney and the court system is ready to go, too.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Right. Now, you are the City that had the ordinance also on taking property that, I guess, somebody has decided people don't need to be carrying around or have with them. And property was taken. Do you all keep track of that and return it to them—

Mr. GARCETTI. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. —and if you do, at what time?

Mr. GARCETTI. We would invite you to the storage centers that we have and the need that we have for many more. But downtown, we have probably the largest storage center in America for individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

They get a ticket to—that is their property. We keep it for them. They don't have to worry about it getting stolen on the street. They can take it out any time of day or night. They are able to go and have that and know that it is safe and secure.

And we have said we cannot begin to do that—and the courts have agreed with us—you can't take people's property. By the way, you can never take their critical property unless—

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Yes, we are talking about due process, and I might note, Mayor, that behind you, there are a couple of people who are shaking their heads that that is not true.

Mr. GARCETTI. No, and they are right. I would not say that there have not been mistakes in the past or that everybody is perfect even today when you talk about the tens of thousands of interactions that happen. My goal is to bring that as close to zero as possible because that is the standard we need to have.

Second, a lot of communities, just like they say no to shelters, say no to even storage centers. So the difficulty of just finding the sheer number of places to do that and the expense to do it when there is no funding for this and you have to figure out a way to fund it, they are very expensive to run, in the millions of dollars a year just to do the storage.

Third is, ideally, you have the storage where people are. So the new model that the chairwoman asked me about of where we are having shelters in the communities where people are homeless, where you can bring your pets and your property and your partners, it is that second piece that is absolutely critical. People aren't going to come off the street if they can't bring their stuff.

Now, at the other end, we do have to all say there isn't an unlimited amount of space ever that when we have homelessness workers who are coming to us complaining that they can't get to and from work, because sometimes the single individual's belongings are as wide as this entire table, we have to be able to make that a services-led, not law enforcement, interaction to reduce the amount of space that somebody has so that folks can get to and from the services they need to have, so that people don't become cocooned.

And I will say one last thing. For serious crimes, if you want to get deep into this, for the encampments that happen, there are people who prey on the folks who are there, who set up shop, who are the serious drug dealers, who are folks who are raping people in tents, and people's unhoused status should not ever shield you from accountability for serious crimes.

And so we can't go so far also that we kind of back off completely of any police presence to protect the very same people who are themselves going through the deepest of traumas.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Yes. And certainly, I am not talking about any serious crimes. I am talking about what I call—

Mr. GARCETTI. Of course.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. —some of the things that a lot of cities are doing to target the homeless to, “get them off the street and not be seen,” especially in downtown areas. And again, I have seen that even in my own City.

Mr. GARCETTI. Sure.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. But my concern was when I read the memo that the committee gave us, it was saying that in this City, it had increased by 31 percent since 2011. That is really significant.

Mr. GARCETTI. No. That number is because for the first time, I demanded we track those. It is not comparing apples to apples. It is for the first time we are actually counting them.

So it was counting over the years in which we barely counted or did not even count. I now wanted to know. Code every single time there is something that is happening to or by somebody who is experiencing homelessness so that we can have those numbers. In the coming years, we will be able—but it has not gone up 31 percent.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. So are any services provided while they are in jail to kind of help them transition or help them—

Mr. GARCETTI. In my opinion, no. And the cities don't—we do have small lockup facilities. But the jails are the County and State, and prisons are the State's responsibilities. Absolutely not enough.

And if we want to solve homelessness, I think a big part of that small sliver of criminal activity that is happening among people who are unhoused is happening because people are coming out of the jails and prisons without a plan. The savings we were promised by the criminal justice reforms that would go to local government, instead of putting folks in a prison system, we don't see.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. One final question. So if we could put a package together or to add to address this specific issue, to—again, I fail to see why cities even do it, but to help you to make sure that you didn't have to criminalize homelessness, what would that one thing be other than funding?

Mr. GARCETTI. We need storage, for sure.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Storage.

Mr. GARCETTI. I don't know, other than funding, if there is anything that the Federal Government has the power to do or that we would want. We need money to be able to create the systems where people can store their goods.

Training for law enforcement officials and City officials who do this. We think we have now some of the best practice. We have been meeting with advocates and from their suggestions have a different regime.

It used to be led by six or seven police officers and then sanitation officials, and it was the wrong message. It was traumatic for people in the streets. Now it is led by people with lived experience, mental health professionals, and people who are even giving trash bags to folks.

We are paying 20 people. We just launched 20 people, who are themselves experiencing homelessness, with jobs to clean up around the areas where they are unhoused, so to empower them with job experience, with some income. They want to clean up, and they say give us the trash bags, let us have the training.

So those sorts of things help, but I don't know if it doesn't come without money, any of them.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

I yield back. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for your indulgence on the overtime.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much.

I would like to thank the Mayor for his valuable time, and again thank all of our witnesses for their testimony today.

The Chair notes that some Members may have additional questions for today's panels, which they may wish to submit in writing. Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days for Members to submit written questions to these witnesses and to place their responses in the record. Also, without objection, Members will have 5 legislative days to submit extraneous materials to the Chair for inclusion in the record.

And before adjourning, I would like to recognize from Watts Century Latino Organization, Arturo Ybarra, the Executive Director. Thank you, Arturo, for being here.

Also, Reverend Reginald Pope, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. He is one of the leaders in the Watts Ministers. He had to leave, but give him a big round of applause anyway.

And of course, last but not least, someone that we all know as an advocate on everything, "Big Money Griff" is here.

Without objection, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:43 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

August 14, 2019

August 14, 2019

Committee on Financial Services: "Examining the Homelessness Crisis in Los Angeles"

Witness:

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Venice Community Housing (VCH) works to reduce homelessness, maximize affordable housing, empower low income constituents, provide social services, and advocate for public policy that protects and strengthens the economic, racial and cultural diversity of Venice and other neighborhoods on the Westside of Los Angeles. VCH owns and operates 236 units of affordable housing, a combination of new construction and housing preservation, including 78 supportive housing units and 28 interim housing units for people experiencing homelessness. VCH also provides property management, social services to all tenants, and other community-based programming such as after-school and YouthBuild programs. VCH currently has four new developments in the pipeline in Venice totaling 225 affordable homes, including 150 new supportive housing units. VCH is active in community organizing and advocacy efforts that protect existing affordable housing and promote the rights of tenants and unhoused residents.

Written Testimony:

While the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles, and throughout the country, has complex and interrelated causes and contributing factors, four core root causes are presented in this written testimony, along with existing or proposed solutions in each area. Given time constraints, this written testimony is not intended to be comprehensive in each issue area, but is based on accessible data, commonly accepted research, and the decades of experience of both Becky Dennison and Venice Community Housing in addressing LA's housing affordability and homelessness crisis. Additionally, Venice Community Housing largely focuses its housing production, preservation and advocacy work in the City of Los Angeles, and this testimony therefore has a focus on the City of Los Angeles, the largest City in the region, with less focus and expertise on the full County and its other 87 cities.

The root causes of homelessness presented and explored, within the Los Angeles context, are as follows:

1. A severe lack of production of affordable housing, and particularly extremely low-income and supportive housing
2. The lack of legal basis and/or political will to preserve all existing affordable, rent stabilized, subsidized or other accessible rental housing
3. Insufficient protections for low and moderate income tenants and homeowners to prevent forced displacement
4. Persistent and targeted efforts to criminalize homelessness or otherwise forcibly remove people from public spaces, though housing and shelter alternatives are not available

Production of affordable, extremely low-income and supportive housing

According to the Southern California Association of Non Profit Housing and California Housing Partnership Corporation, at least 500,000 affordable housing units are required in Los Angeles County to meet the current need. According to the City of Los Angeles Housing Element (2013-2021), 25 percent of all new housing built is needed for very low-income and extremely low-income households (50% of median and 30% of median, respectively). Yet in that same Housing Element, based on available resources, the City projected to produce just 75% of its overall need, only about 37% of the need at very low-income and just 17% of the need at the extremely low-income level. With the largest production gaps at the lowest income levels, it is not surprising that homelessness continues at crisis levels in Los Angeles. Though resources have increased at the local and State level since the Housing Element was produced, it is not likely they can eliminate the disparity for the lowest income production needs. The Los Angeles region simply has an overwhelming lack of production of affordable housing and, even with recent local gains, faces a significant gap in meeting production needs.

Los Angeles has also under-produced supportive housing. Supportive housing, targeting people who are experiencing homelessness at the time of lease up, is an evidence-based solution for homelessness among people with disabilities or others who benefit from a high level of social services. Supportive housing has been a widely accepted proven solution for at least 15 years, and has been a model used in Los Angeles for over 20 years. Yet, within the scale of Los Angeles' need, only about 6,500 units were produced in the City of LA over that same 20 year period. Los Angeles and California voters have passed multiple ballot initiatives in the past three years focused on producing new supportive housing, and projects currently in the pipeline have exceeded planned goals in a short timeframe. However, without additional resources from the Federal government, and sustained or permanent resources locally, LA will take a significant step forward but will not meet the overall need.

Los Angeles has an experienced and successful affordable and supportive housing development community, which has grown in recent years. LA has also begun to take needed steps to streamline approvals for affordable and supportive housing, with more improvements necessary. With increased and sustained resources, the development capacity exists, or could be rapidly achieved, to meet the actual needs of low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income people in LA, including those currently without housing.

The role of the federal government includes:

- Significantly increasing rental subsidy, particularly for supportive housing and extremely low-income housing which rely on rental subsidy for feasible and sustainable projects. Currently, housing authorities must make decisions in a scarcity environment, balancing the need for new supportive housing, affordable housing, public housing rehabilitation programs, and tenant-based housing choice vouchers within a limited pool of rental subsidy. There is nowhere near enough to cover even a portion of all of these needs.
- Addressing the issue of under-production of extremely low-income housing, including but not limited to reforms or alternatives to the tax credit program which does not address the extremely low-income need.
- Massive reinvestment in affordable housing production across all low income categories at investment levels similar to 1978, including reinvestment in the public housing program. The budget authority for low and moderate income housing was cut 77% from 1978 to 1983 and has never been restored.

Preservation of all affordable, rent-stabilized, subsidized or other accessible rental housing

LA's homeless crisis is persistent because more people enter homelessness each year than exit, partially due to the loss of affordable rental housing. According to the City's Housing Element, from 2000 to 2011, 40% of the City's rental units that were affordable to households making less than \$22,000 a year and 143,000 rental units that were affordable to households making less than \$44,000 a year became unaffordable. Thousands more are at risk of losing affordability in the coming years due to expiring use restrictions, removal of housing from the market, and/or lack of vacancy controls on rents in California.

Housing preservation efforts face significant challenges due to the lack of requirement or incentive for private landlords to remain in the affordable housing market when use restrictions expire, state laws that limit the effectiveness of rent stabilization and rent control ordinances, and other factors. Los Angeles must do better, even within these limitations. Increased and more effective enforcement of existing laws protecting units and tenants, targeted investment in housing and rental rate preservation in gentrifying communities, and expanding local implementation policies for restrictive state laws would improve the situation.

The role of the federal government includes:

- Increase resources for housing rehabilitation and preservation, in addition to production, in all funding streams to expand the limited pool currently covering both.
- Improve the public housing preservation programs so that resources for rehabilitation, operations and rental subsidies are expanded to meet the public housing need, and eliminate the current competition for limited resources between public housing preservation and additional housing needs.
- Limit or eliminate market-based solutions that have expiring use timelines, and/or require timeline extensions based on existing affordable housing need.

Protection of tenants and homeowners against forced displacement

Interrelated to the need for preservation of housing affordable to low and moderate income people is the need to directly protect people living in these housing units. The devastating impacts of the foreclosure crisis on low and moderate income households is well documented, and also exacerbated the rental housing shortage in LA as more households became renters. Tenants in market-rate, subsidized and public housing have faced varied levels of eviction and forced displacement, with tenant rights generally not reaching a level of equity with landlord or property owner rights. California has several laws in place that prevent the strengthening of anti-displacement policies and practices, most notably the Ellis and Costa-Hawkins Acts. Within these limitations, Los Angeles can still implement new policies that better protect tenants such as a Right to Counsel for those facing eviction, enactment of just-cause eviction and limited rent increase policies in cities that don't yet have them, and reforms to the City of Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance. State law changes are urgently needed, though, to reduce evictions and forced displacement that force many into short or long-term homelessness.

The role of the federal government includes:

- Enact and enforce the strongest tenant protections for public and subsidized housing tenants, including a particular focus on eviction prevention or prohibition during public housing rehabilitation projects.
- Prevent the enactment or implementation of any displacement policies, most urgently the proposed mixed-status families policy that would impact thousands of families in Los Angeles alone, forcing many of them into homelessness and all into crisis and trauma.

Ending the criminalization of homelessness and forced displacement from public space

Los Angeles has invested incredible financial and political resources in policies and initiatives explicitly intended to criminalize homelessness, as well as other initiatives framed as an alternative approach but resulting in harassment and forced displacement of unhoused residents. It is well documented that Los Angeles has an extreme shortage of housing across all types, including emergency, bridge and permanent housing. Therefore, LA also has the largest unsheltered homeless population in the country.

Criminalization efforts in Los Angeles in the last decade have ranged from intentional, targeted, and intense policing such as the Safer Cities Initiative in downtown Los Angeles (2006 – 2014), resulting in tens of thousands of arrests for minor offenses such as sitting on the sidewalk or drug possession. As a result of community organizing and growing evidence that criminalization violates human and civil rights, is expensive, and prevented people from accessing housing, Los Angeles leadership changed its rhetoric and to some extent its approach beginning in 2014. However, at the same time, in addition to more than a dozen “quality of life” laws already on the books, new laws were enacted to criminalize sleeping in vehicles and the possession of reasonable property. Also, new initiatives, such as Operation Healthy Streets (2014-2019), were enacted that were not explicitly intended to criminalize people but had the same result of forced displacement, illegal seizure of property, and other harassment that made it harder for people to become housed or simply survive.

Based on research by UCLA and investigation by the LA Times, arrests of homeless residents increased 31% from 2011 to 2016, at the same time Los Angeles Police Department arrests overall decreased by 15 percent. Two-thirds of those arrested were Black or Latino, and the rate of arrests citywide among homeless residents went up from 1 in 10 in 2011 to 1 in 6 in 2016. These arrests, and similar harassment, property confiscation and displacement, result in human and civil rights violations and also prevent people from work with outreach workers and others to access much needed housing. These practices exacerbate homelessness overall, and discriminate against people for their current unhoused status.

Unhoused and especially completely unsheltered people and communities need emergency interventions that meet basic needs and promote health, even in extreme and unacceptable conditions overall. Los Angeles organizations have produced a Services Not Sweeps platform that must be enacted, calling for the provision of restrooms, showers, and other health-based interventions until Los Angeles can provide safe housing for all in need. <https://servicesnotsweeps.com/>

The role of the federal government includes:

- Provide funding, and/or incentivize or match local funding, for health-based, street-based solutions, as are provided in any other emergency such as natural disasters.
- Proactively prevent cities and localities from enacting or enforcing unconstitutional laws and practice.
- Enforce HUD’s anti-criminalization mandate in the Continuum of Care program, though attention must be paid to prevent harm to unhoused residents by withholding or reducing funds.

Disparate Impacts (Subpopulations)

The invitation to testify included a question regarding subpopulations most affected by homelessness and Venice Community Housing's services targeting these groups. There are many groups of people disproportionately impacted by homelessness, and/or have seen drastic increases in homelessness recently, including African Americans, other communities of color, women, domestic violence survivors, youth and young adults, seniors, Veterans, people with mental illnesses, and others. Venice Community Housing works diligently to ensure all housing is inclusive and to remove any barriers – intended or unintended – for specific groups of people in accessing housing. Additionally, we have housing that specifically prioritizes underserved groups, including people with severe mental illnesses and young adults. All government programs must ensure those most impacted are intentionally included, funded at appropriate levels, and have specific and relevant services for those groups.

However, we caution against too much prioritization of specific groups of people, as the right to housing requires an approach that provides housing for all in need. Prioritization of chronic homelessness, for example, is an understandable policy decision in an environment of far too scarce resources. In doing so, though, other people facing homelessness have even more restricted resources. We must invest at the level of real need, not the needs of one particular group most impacted. Resources can and should still be targeted to specific groups' needs and conditions, but not at the expense of (or justification for) investment that would truly address and solve homelessness.

The one exception to the statement above is the need to address the unacceptable overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness that has been persistent in Los Angeles for far too long. Longstanding patterns of housing discrimination, employment discrimination and exclusion, racism in the criminal justice system and other government systems, and other factors drive this disparity and must inform and drive all programs, policies and solutions. We refer you to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Ad Hoc Committee report and recommendations for further exploration of needed initiatives and solutions. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2823-report-and-recommendations-of-the-ad-hoc-committee-on-black-people-experiencing-homelessness>

Conclusion

Los Angeles and California can and must implement new policies and funding streams that address the scale of need for affordable and supportive housing production, housing preservation, and tenant protections, as well as eliminate policies and practices that are unjust and ineffective. The federal government could help create incentives or pressure to do so, though that seems unlikely in the current administration. However, LA and all regional efforts will not succeed in solving the homelessness crisis without massive reinvestment in housing for those most in need at the federal level. H.R. 1856 reflects a significant step forward in the federal reinvestment needed, but additional efforts will be required to meet the scale of housing need and advance the human right to housing.

**Testimony of
Dora Leong Gallo
President & Chief Executive Officer
A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS**

**to the
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives**

**“Examining the Homelessness Crisis in Los Angeles”
Field Hearing - August 14, 2019**

Introduction

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, I am honored to have been invited on behalf of A Community of Friends to provide testimony to the Financial Services Committee on the homeless crisis in Los Angeles. Thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Dora Leong Gallo and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of A Community of Friends (ACOF), a nonprofit affordable housing development corporation with the specific mission of ending homelessness for individuals and families affected by mental illness. Established in 1988, our organization has been developing ‘permanent supportive housing’ long before this term was coined – combining affordable housing development with services provision for the most vulnerable in our community. In the past 30 years, we have completed 50 apartment buildings throughout Los Angeles and Orange County, including two buildings in San Diego County. Currently, we operate 43 buildings, housing over 2,500 adults, including 600+ children. ACOF provides services, property management and asset management of our buildings.

In my testimony today, I will not be discussing the homelessness numbers in Los Angeles as my colleagues from the City and County of Los Angeles will have already done so. Instead, my focus will be on ACOF’s response to the homeless crisis, the type of services we have found to be most effective in keeping people stable in homes, specific populations with unique service needs, the types of federal, state and local funding that are critical to our work, and how Congress might help Los Angeles address the homeless crisis in our community.

Trends in Homelessness / ACOF Response

Homelessness is a complicated problem but can be summed up as the result of what happens when there is an extreme lack of both affordable housing and a strong safety net. For a long time, I used to categorize homelessness into two areas. The first are the people who are economically/situationally homeless (e.g. people who fell into homelessness due to economic circumstances like job loss and catastrophic illness or injury). These people can usually find their way out of homelessness within a few months, often with the help of friends and family. The second group are people who are extremely low income and/or have chronic disabilities that make full time work difficult. These are the people who are particularly vulnerable, have less family support, and thus need extensive help and services to exit homelessness. This limited

view of homelessness no longer holds true. A trend that has occurred in Los Angeles is that more and more people are falling into homelessness who work and have jobs. Stagnant wages and rising rents have increasingly produced a third category of homelessness – the working poor. With a lack of affordable housing, many people cannot pull themselves out of homelessness without some government intervention.

Rents are now rising faster than renter incomes. The median monthly asking rent in Los Angeles is \$2,471; this means renters in Los Angeles need to earn \$47.52 per hour to afford the median rent.¹ As a result, the rental cost burden (percent of income going toward housing) are growing. In Los Angeles, 79% of extremely low income households (defined as incomes at or below 30% of area median income) are paying more than half of their income on housing costs.²

The supply of affordable rental units is also not keeping pace with demand. Recent studies show Los Angeles County needs 516,946 more affordable rental homes to meet current demand.³ In 2018, the City of Los Angeles permitted 27,366 homes, of which only 11%, or 2,942 affordable.⁴ Add to this market pressure demolition and conversion of existing rental housing and displacement and gentrification occurs.

People making minimum wage or have a chronic disability such as mental health or addiction, are particularly vulnerable to losing their housing. Households with special needs are more likely than other households to have extremely low incomes. In Los Angeles, extremely low income equates to \$21,950 for an individual. In the Los Angeles – Long Beach – Anaheim Metropolitan Area, there are only 18 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low income renter household.⁵

This is where ACOF focuses its work. Our response to the homeless crisis is the production and operation of permanent supportive housing – the most vulnerable who are extremely low income and have a disability. Our approach is Housing First, because if we only provided services without addressing someone’s housing status, they would still be homeless. Of ACOF’s 1,700 apartment units, 1505 apartments are in Los Angeles County, ranging from San Fernando Valley to San Pedro, Boyle Heights to Hollywood, Compton to Koreatown. Our goal is to provide affordable homes to those who need the most help, and then provide the services needed to help people stay in housing, including healthcare, and to break that cycle of poverty.

Supports and Services that are Most Effective in Helping Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

As a nonprofit housing developer focusing on those with chronic disabling conditions, we find supportive housing combined with a harm reduction approach as the most effective housing type to keep people from cycling back into homelessness. A Community of Friends has found that given an opportunity to live in decent, safe and affordable housing, with no time restrictions, tenants can begin focusing on other issues in their life, such as mental health, addiction, and other physical health needs. By offering supportive services on-site, including intensive case

¹ California Housing Partnership, LA County’s Housing Emergency Update, May 2019

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning - Housing Progress Report, Quarter Report January–March 2019

⁵ National Low Income Housing Coalition, The Gap, March 2019

management, referrals, independent living skills/groups, mental health services, primary care referrals to community resources, and substance abuse recovery services, tenants can more easily access services and gain the care and skills needed to maintain their housing.

There has been enough research conducted in supportive housing over the past decade to demonstrate that supportive housing is in itself an evidence-based practice in ending homelessness for those with chronic disabilities. Another evidence-based practice that ACOF has found useful is Critical Time Intervention, where intensive support is mobilized early to ensure successful tenancy and lessening as a person becomes more independent and less in need of intensive support. Stable affordable housing with direct services result in less risk of relapse from addition or back into homelessness. Over time, it also results in greater responsibility and independence both socially and economically for the tenants who live there.

Populations more affected by the Homeless Crisis

In the 30 years A Community of Friends has been providing housing for those most vulnerable, we have learned that there are some groups of homeless individuals with more distinct service needs, such as veterans, youth and people escaping domestic/intimate partner violence. Homelessness among youth and people experiencing domestic violence/intimate partner violence increased significantly in Los Angeles this past year, 24% and 28%, respectively.⁶ Homelessness among Veterans saw virtually no increase due in large part to the significant and targeted resources directed at ending veteran homelessness the past several years.

Trauma is the unifying factor for everyone in these groups. As a result, services teams working with veterans, youth and people affected by domestic/intimate partner violence require an understanding of trauma and its impacts, as well as utilization of trauma-informed care principles in the delivery of services.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the disproportionate number of African-Americans in Los Angeles who experience homelessness. In 2017, 40% of those who were homeless were Black, yet Black people made up only 9% of Los Angeles County's population.⁷

Federal, State and Local Programs

To build and operate our housing, ACOF utilizes every funding program for which our organization is eligible. These sources include capital resources for construction, operating or rental subsidy programs for affordability, and services funding.

Programs from the federal level include the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Continuum of Care program under the McKinney-Vento Act and Project Based Vouchers program, the national Housing Trust Fund (block grants to States funded through small mandatory contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac), and HOME funds administered by various cities and counties, as well as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program administered by the State of California.

⁶ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Homeless Point in Time Count, 2019

⁷ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, December 2018.

Programs at the State level include various programs administered by the California Housing and Community Development Department, such as the Multifamily Housing Program and voter approved bond funded programs like Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention and the recently approved No Place Like Home.

At the local level, voters of the City and County of Los Angeles approved and made available bond and sale tax revenue for Proposition HHH (capital) and Measure H (services). We are also partners with the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health and Department of Health Services in ensuring additional direct services support to the tenants in our buildings.

As a practitioner, I can tell you firsthand how important all of these various funding programs have been to our efforts to end homelessness for individuals and families with disabilities. Providing the level of support and services needed to end homelessness for people who have been on the streets for years require a sustained and long term commitment. To be successful, a nonprofit organization like A Community of Friends must partner with government, our colleagues in the nonprofit community, the community, and the private sector to address this crisis.

How Congress Can Help

Congress has a role to play as well, and I appreciate the opportunity to thank the Members for the recent bipartisan agreement to lift FY2020 discretionary spending limits. Investments in federal programs must continue if homelessness is truly to be eradicated. Over the past 11 years, cuts in Federal and State funding have reduced investment in affordable housing in Los Angeles County by more 70% since 2008. The reduction from the Federal funding totaled \$77 million annually since 2008, a 31% reduction.⁸

Fund Homeless Programs

While we understand the current funding constraints, we agree with Chairwoman Waters that it will be difficult to make significant progress towards ending homelessness in Los Angeles without substantial new funding. The citizens of Los Angeles have done our part by voting to tax ourselves to provide the resources needed to address this crisis; we need Congress to also take action. This is why we support H.R. 1856 and commend Chairwoman Waters for introducing the *Ending Homelessness Act of 2019*. The \$13.27 billion proposed over five years would be among the most significant investment towards this crisis. At minimum, we urge Congress to provide at least \$5 billion to HUD's McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Grant program in Fiscal Year 2020—a \$2.36 billion increase over last year's funding levels.

Capital Investments in Affordable Housing

In addition to funding homeless programs, Congress should continue increasing capital investments to build, preserve and rehabilitate homes affordable to people with the lowest income. These dollars can address other challenges as well, like revitalizing distressed communities, providing housing options for low income families in tight or gentrifying markets, and producing accessible housing for persons with disabilities.

⁸ California Housing Partnership, LA County's Housing Emergency Update, May 2019

The national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is another critical source for the creation or rehabilitation of homes affordable to extremely low income and very low income households. HTF funds can only be used to benefit extremely low-income households, which makes this funding source an important tool in addressing the homeless crisis in our community. At least 90% of the funds must be used for rental housing and at least 75% of those funds must benefit extremely low-income households. Housing finance reform related to the government-sponsored enterprises that fund the HTF offers an opportunity to increase resources for the HTF.

ACOF also supports efforts to expand and improve the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). The Housing Credit is a model public-private partnership, that has become our country's most successful tool for encouraging private investment in the production and preservation of affordable rental housing. Nationwide, it has financed 3.2 million apartments since 1986, which have provided approximately 7.4 million low-income families, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities homes they can afford. In Los Angeles, it is an important tool to leveraging local resources in the creation of supportive housing. We urge Congress to pass the bipartisan *Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act* (H.R. 3077) that would expand the Housing Credit authority by 50% to help create more affordable rental housing.

Funding to End Veteran Homelessness

While homelessness increased for virtually every group of people in Los Angeles in our 2019 Point in Time Count, it remained static for veterans. We firmly believe this was due to the dedicated resources Congress made to this crisis several years ago. After bipartisan congressional support and robust federal funding for U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), HUD, and other programs serving homeless veterans, two states and many communities have effectively ended veteran homelessness. We can do the same in Los Angeles. We urge Congress to continue to provide housing and services resources to homeless veterans in a systematic, targeted way, including continued support for the VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families program and Project Based HUD-VASH Vouchers.

Closing Comments

Thank you again for the invitation to provide testimony on the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles. A Community of Friends applauds all of you for your leadership and continued focus to this issue. Despite the scale of the problem, Los Angeles continues to be seen as a national leader in the implementation of solutions to address the homeless crisis. This is because Los Angeles has a strong community of nonprofit organizations, public officials, business leaders, and private citizens working together for the common purpose of ending homelessness. Partnering with our congressional leaders, we know we can make a difference for the thousands of homeless individuals and families in our County. Thank you, Chairwoman Waters, for holding this field hearing in Los Angeles and for soliciting our input.

**Statement of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti & Deputy Mayor Christina Miller
before the House Committee on Financial Services Field Hearing on “Examining
the Homelessness Crisis in Los Angeles.”
Wednesday, August 14, 2019**

Introduction:

Chairwoman Waters, Ranking Member Henry, and Members of the Committee: my name is Eric Garcetti, and I serve as Mayor of Los Angeles.

Without a doubt, homelessness is the most urgent moral and humanitarian crisis of our time. It is a difficult, complex emergency confronting our city, state, and nation, and addressing it requires immediate action from all levels of government.

Here in Los Angeles, we are facing this challenge head-on, with every possible resource at our disposal. Each day, we are focused on bringing our neighbors indoors, delivering services to Angelenos experiencing homelessness, and preventing families from winding up on our sidewalks in the first place. We are devoting more funds in our City budget than ever before — a 25-fold increase from four years ago. We are housing more people across our county than ever before — finding a home for nearly 22,000 Angelenos in 2018 alone.

Yet the number of homeless individuals in our city and region continues to grow, a result of long-running trends that range from our housing shortage, unaffordable rents, and income inequality, to issues surrounding mental illness, substance abuse, and the criminal justice system. Too often, folks are falling into homelessness faster than we can house them.

All the while, decades of disinvestment by the state and federal governments have only compounded the problem, part of a series of policy decisions that have built up over the years and hampered our efforts to turn the tide on this emergency.

That has to change. We have to own up to the reality of how we reached this point — and do more, faster, to get the job done on behalf of everyone who calls Los Angeles home.

That is what we are discussing today: how the City is identifying and responding to the trends driving homelessness, alongside our regional partners; what our effective service interventions include; how we address the complex needs of specific populations; how

we can and will deploy local, state, and federal resources; and what we need Congress to do right now to help us move the needle in Los Angeles and across the country.

Trends

It has never been more apparent that the housing crisis is inextricably linked to homelessness, as first-time homelessness continues to increase due to economic factors. When I took office, the City's toolbox to deal with this crisis was severely constrained. Housing production slowed during the Great Recession, exacerbating the shortage that had grown since the 1980s in the midst of widespread anti-growth sentiment in Los Angeles. The City's chronic affordability crisis among the lowest-income Angelenos, and an acute shortage of affordable homeownership opportunities for middle-income families, creates the pressure that forces people out of their homes and into their cars, and oftentimes, into tents on the street.

According to the California Housing Partnership Corporation, we have a deficit of 516,946 affordable homes across Los Angeles County that would serve to meet the needs of households making less than 50% of the Area Median Income. This is compounded by reductions to HUD grants long used for increasing the affordable housing supply, such as HOME and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Coupled with woefully underfunded federal rental assistance and public housing programs and state reductions in affordable housing investments over the last decade and a half, along with rising rents and an increasing shortfall in available affordable units, the cumulative effects of these trends has contributed to the unsheltered crisis of homelessness we see today in California.

According to the results of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Point-in-Time annual homeless count, homelessness impacts less than 1% of the Los Angeles population, with 58,936 people counted Countywide and 36,165 Citywide. **We know this is just the tip of the iceberg.** There are more than 950,000 low-income households in Los Angeles County that experience severe housing challenges and are teetering on the verge of homelessness. They either pay more than half their income on housing or live in severely overcrowded or substandard living conditions. According to public opinion polls, homelessness is seen as one of, if not the, most urgent and important issue impacting communities.

Consistently, we have found that the homeless population is comprised of roughly two-thirds men and one-third women (with 2% transgender). Three out of four persons counted are unsheltered, and 65% to 75% of households have lived in the Los Angeles

area for 10 years or more. One-third of people experiencing homelessness report mental illness and/or substance abuse issues. Black Angelenos are disproportionately represented when compared to the overall population (35% to 40% of the homeless population, while making up just 9% of the overall County population). What's more, according to count results, approximately 65% of the homeless population has had some involvement with the criminal justice system.

While issues of incarceration, mental health, drug addiction, and trauma are key themes among homeless Angelenos, economic factors are driving more people into homelessness than before.

Responses

A strategic response to homelessness began in earnest with the establishment of the Coordinated Entry System in 2013; the adoption of formal City and County plans in 2016; the meaningful and sizable investments stemming from the passage of the City's Proposition HHH supportive housing loan program in 2016, and the County's Measure H program in 2017. **All told, these measures together will yield nearly \$5 billion over 10 years.**

This year's City of Los Angeles Homelessness Budget amounts to \$462 million—25 times the homelessness budget in 2015—with two-thirds of spending going towards permanent housing. Through an action-oriented partnership with the County, LAHSA, and philanthropy, the City is focused on a response that can be broken down into three areas:

1. Preventing homelessness,
2. Reducing street homelessness, and
3. Increasing and preserving affordable and supportive housing.

Additionally, for the first time ever, the City has a place-based strategy in Skid Row, the epicenter of the region's crisis.

Homelessness prevention is a key part of our regional strategy, and we continue to learn how best to target these resources. We understand that many households experiencing homelessness over the course of a year resolve their homelessness entirely on their own; in fact, it is estimated that 27,000 people did so last year without touching the system at all.

But Los Angeles' housing shortage and affordability crisis is changing the face of the City by forcing Angelenos out of their homes and onto the streets. Even though many residents have legal rights that would preserve their tenancies and entitle them to relief, they lack the knowledge of those rights, and they lack the power or ability to successfully advocate on their own behalf. Tens of thousands are ending up on the street, imposing unprecedented costs and stress on City services.

The best way to prevent homelessness is to keep people in their current homes.

One of the most effective ways to do that is through an eviction defense program that intervenes before families are forced from their units. For example, in the first year of New York City's program, 84% of represented tenants remained in their homes.

We are developing a framework for an eviction defense program that will support tenants at every moment of their tenancy, from when they move in, with information about landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities; to when they are at risk and look for help with advice and mediation, and through a legal notice and court if it escalates to such a level.

The goal is to never reach that moment. We want to reduce eviction filings so that a tenant will never need a lawyer in court to level the playing field. Instead, we want to stabilize communities through cost-saving early interventions and through leveraging existing systems for support. This will not only reduce the trauma of displacement, but will reduce inflow into homelessness.

The program will launch this year with a \$3 million initial investment. This "phase-in" approach in a few designated geographies will allow for the provision of the full scope of services to keep people in their housing and to realize associated cost savings. We are also including a robust evaluation to begin building the infrastructure to go to scale as soon as possible.

The City knows that the needs of those living in unsheltered conditions—on the street, in vehicles, in encampments, and in other outdoor circumstances—are central to the work of improving and ensuring their, and our neighborhoods' health and safety. Part of my strategy includes designating a team of experts in the public services field to coordinate interdepartmental strategies within the City and County of Los Angeles, as well as the state, that serve unsheltered individuals with public health and sanitation in mind. In April 2018, I founded the Unified Homelessness Response Center, centered out of the City's Emergency Management Department, which serves as the one-stop hub for these coordinated health and sanitation responses. The City's Sanitation

Department also revised its strategies in deploying cleaning and hygiene services to encampments, ensuring that unsheltered individuals living together are treated with respect and empathy, and are given the personal sanitation services necessary to stay healthy.

Before finding permanent housing, many unsheltered Angelenos enter into temporary or bridge housing. In 2018, my team committed to standing up at least 15 interim housing sites across Los Angeles through our signature A Bridge Home initiative. At the start of this effort, at least 25,000 individuals in the City on any given night did not have access to a shelter bed. Serving vulnerable populations where they live by signing up residents closest to the sites, A Bridge Home helps unsheltered Angelenos regain the feeling of safety and security that only a bed and a roof can provide, along with supportive mental health and case management services. The City has currently opened four sites, and will open 22 more before the end of the current fiscal year. When completed, A Bridge Home will put nearly 2,000 beds online to serve those who need them the most.

My first-term housing strategies can best be described as getting “back to basics,” making development work, and replenishing funding sources. We advanced an aggressive development reform agenda, establishing a goal to surpass our Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocations and permit 100,000 new units of housing by 2021—a goal we’re set to hit two years early. This construction boom is facilitated by new streamlining initiatives. It will be extended by our advocacy efforts in Sacramento to remove regulatory barriers and by updating our local zoning codes to increase housing capacity.

In order to meet the needs of our most vulnerable homeless Angelenos, the \$1.2 billion Proposition HHH loan program has led to the City more than tripling its existing supportive housing pipeline, with 110 projects and over 7,400 units on their way to people living on our streets and in other circumstances, putting us on track to meet the goal to build 10,000 units of supportive housing by 2026.

But my Administration knows that a completely free-market approach to any marketplace does not always result in benefits that trickle down to all. That is why my first term also focused on policies that harness the benefits of private investment for lower-income communities. We’ve done that by implementing the City’s first inclusionary zoning program, the Affordable Housing Linkage Fee, which mandates the inclusion of affordable housing in market-rate developments or payment of a fee to capitalize our affordable housing programs.

We've also enhanced our land-use incentives through the Transit Oriented Communities program and Measure JJJ, which work in tandem with the Linkage Fee, resulting in more mixed-income developments. We've piloted innovative preservation programs and reinstated our moderate income homeownership program to combat displacement.

We are strongly advocating for tenant rights both in Sacramento and City Hall, establishing a tenant rights awareness campaign and strengthening our local rent-stabilization ordinance, as well as establishing the aforementioned eviction defense program, and supporting tenant protection laws like AB1482 (an anti-rent gouging and rent cap law) and an anti-discrimination law for rental assistance programs such as Section 8.

We are firmly committed to housing innovation. Our administration is currently focused on several initiatives that encourage alternative methods to deliver housing solutions in a more cost effective and timely manner. First is the implementation of the \$120 million Proposition HHH Housing Challenge to fund alternative construction and finance models for supportive housing.

Finally, our local response to homelessness is in part focused on the epicenter of this crisis, the Skid Row area. This is where extreme poverty cuts the deepest, where the greatest need is concentrated, and where we have to get the strongest handle on issues of public health.

That is why the City has a place-based strategy in Skid Row for the first time in its history. With the initial State funds that we received last year, we directed \$20 million to the following projects and initiatives:

- Three new interim housing programs that equate to roughly 200 beds for single adults and families
- Increased hygiene infrastructure, with six new water fountains, mobile shower services, the new Skid Row Clean Team (which hires among currently and formerly homeless Skid Row residents), additional sharps collection stations, and eight new dumpsters strategically placed throughout Skid Row for easy access
- Two additional Homeless Engagement Teams, and drastically expanded outreach capacity, so that we can continue improving and expanding outreach on Skid Row, and move homeless Angelenos indoors as quickly as possible.

The new \$2 million Skid Row Clean Team program, which will employ about 20 residents of Skid Row to provide trash pickup five days a week, started this month. This

effort is coordinated with additional sanitation services already provided in the area—helping us to move us closer to our shared vision of a cleaner, safer Skid Row.

The employment opportunities that focus on cleanliness are extremely important, as public health is of grave concern on Skid Row. While levels of flea-borne typhus have returned to baseline in the Skid Row area, that doesn't mean our work is done—far from it. Additional ways in which we have made public health a top priority in Skid Row is through the ReFresh Spot, a personal care center that provides showers, toilets, and laundry facilities for Angelenos experiencing homelessness. The ReFresh Spot delivers over 600 units of service per day.

Supports and Services

Given the diversity of needs within the homeless population, it is challenging to identify a singular service or support that is more effective than others to quickly resolve a person's homelessness. At a fundamental level, we know that an effective response is both systems-oriented and housing-oriented.

In Los Angeles, our homeless service system has grown to a level of sophistication where it has successfully more than doubled the rate at which it housed those experiencing homelessness since 2014. We have achieved this by adopting a standardized assessment tool for all "front doors" of the system to use, ensuring that households are recommended for a housing intervention of best fit, working systemically to reduce the barriers to accessing the recommended housing intervention, and leveraging the social safety net of resources to help a person retain the housing they're placed.

In Los Angeles, we are deploying interventions that represent national best practices and were highlighted by the President of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Nan Roman, at its recent annual conference:

- improved outreach efforts,
- low barrier housing-focused shelters,
- homeless diversion programs,
- targeted employment programs, and
- permanent housing placements, including rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and new innovative housing models.

Moreover, homeless services have shifted from being site-based to field-based, with service teams on the streets engaging people in encampments to reduce barriers to

access. Given the overwhelming number of people living in unsheltered conditions, our systemic response has found that case management engagements need to be mobile. It is not uncommon for an outreach team to have a van outfitted with a printer, copier, and various office supplies.

Baked into effective supports and services are core evidence-based philosophies: housing-first, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care. To summarize, the goal of our work is based on a philosophical approach to service that focuses on reducing the obstacles that block a person's path to housing, and helps them safely access the assistance they need to obtain an affordable housing option meant to permanently end a person's homelessness. Ultimately, in Los Angeles, we believe that with the right level of supports attached, any person can thrive indoors.

Subpopulations and Targeted Responses

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, almost all vulnerable subpopulations in the region saw increases in homelessness, including women, youth, families, the chronically homeless, and senior citizens; and while veterans homelessness remained relatively flat this year, the region is continuing to target resources to address homelessness among this population as well.

Countywide, we saw youth homelessness increase by 22%. This is an alarming trend as we must do what we can to ensure our newly homeless youth of today do not become the chronically homeless adults of tomorrow. Homeless youth are assessed with a tailored tool called the "next-step tool." We understand that family reunification, shared housing, and employment interventions can be especially effective. We also know that youth who have had system involvement are more likely to experience homelessness, particularly with the foster care system. We are supportive of efforts by our County partners to identify this as a feeder system to homelessness, and embed housing-focused services to prevent episodes of homelessness, but we recognize that much more work needs to be done in this area.

As service providers and policy makers, we know that each of these subpopulations requires different and tailored approaches in addressing homelessness. LAHSA is home to a number of ad hoc committees focusing on the needs of specific subpopulations, including women and Black Angelenos.

How We Have Targeted Federal, State, and Local Funds

The federal housing safety net is absolutely critical to the success of the local resources we have created in Los Angeles. Every local dollar we spend is leveraging a federal housing program. For instance, the City subsidizes supportive housing at about \$145,000 per unit through our \$1.2 billion Proposition HHH program. With every local dollar spent, we leverage another \$4 from private investment through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program and other federal and state capital programs.

We also project-base federal housing choice vouchers on every supportive housing unit we build, which causes more constraints on the roughly 50,000 housing choice vouchers the city has through its housing authority. Right now, a little more than one third of our Section 8 portfolio is devoted to homelessness initiatives. That means that every year, it is more and more difficult for a low-income family that is teetering on the verge of homelessness to obtain a Section 8 voucher.

National homelessness and housing experts agree that the Los Angeles region has served as a model for program and policy implementation in locally managing the homelessness crisis. Voters in the City of Los Angeles have taxed themselves since 2017 to contribute to Proposition HHH, a \$1.2 billion bond that supports the building of up to 10,000 permanent supportive housing units. The first two Proposition HHH-funded housing projects will open this fall, and projects using Proposition HHH funds for facilities have already begun opening. The City has also committed over \$80 million to our interim housing initiative, A Bridge Home. Through A Bridge Home, the City is working to establish temporary housing shelters across the City's 15 Council Districts. There are currently four A Bridge Home sites open now, with an estimated 22 to open by the end of this current fiscal year.

Residents of the County of Los Angeles have also increased funding through the passage of Measure H, which contributes tax dollars to three key categories of work directed to ending homelessness: offering prevention programs to keep vulnerable Angelenos out of homelessness, placing individuals into permanent housing, and funding services at bridge housing sites. This measure contributes about \$355 million annually, and is integral to providing, in part, the necessary supportive services that homeless and economically-impacted individuals need concurrently while receiving housing.

Our local and regional investments have had a significant impact in stemming increases in homelessness in Los Angeles. Neighboring counties have experienced higher percentage increases up to 50% over the past year. However, any increase in homelessness is unacceptable. The State of California has impressively responded to

this by investing surplus budget funds through its Homeless Emergency Aid (HEAP) and Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAPP) funding. Since 2018, California has distributed \$500 million in homelessness and housing funding across the state, prioritizing regions that are overwhelmingly impacted by the crisis. The City of Los Angeles received \$85 million in HEAP funding last year, using it towards bridge housing, supportive services, youth programming, and devoting \$20 million for programs and services targeting our most impacted neighborhood, Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles. My office also used administrative funds to stand up an entire policy team devoted solely to homelessness, bringing together experts in interim and permanent housing and in City services to ensure that every step on the path towards housing—from unsheltered living on the street, to sheltered stays, to a permanent home—is met with safety, security, and empathy in mind.

While the City and County of Los Angeles and the state of California commit to unprecedented levels of new investments into homelessness and housing strategies, the City continues to leverage investments by the federal government through the series of grants known as the Consolidated (Con) Plan, consisting of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and Housing Opportunities for Persons Living with AIDS (HOPWA). In 2018, the City's Housing and Community Investment Department (HCIDLA) published its latest five-year Consolidated Plan, outlining the expected expenditures of these funds.

The Con Plan is focused on achieving the following six goals while leveraging federal funds:

1. Develop affordable housing for homeless and low-income Angelenos
2. Preserve existing affordable housing
3. Stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods
4. Prevent and reduce homelessness and domestic violence
5. Improve the local economy for low-income residents
6. Help low-income families to stabilize economically

Similar to our team's strategies in managing active homelessness, the Con Plan focuses on ensuring that the affordable housing pipeline is continuing to receive investments for growth and preservation. As well, homelessness prevention is a key focus of the Con Plan. The City aims to create nearly 4,000 jobs through Con Plan funds, collaborating with my Office and interdepartmentally to strengthen workforce development programs such as the City's signature WorkSource Centers. By offering key vulnerable populations—particularly victims of domestic violence—the chance to

develop entrepreneurial skills while receiving shelter, those who are more at risk of becoming homelessness can stabilize before entering the unsheltered cycle.

How Congress Can Address the Homelessness Crisis

The Chair's proposed bill, HR 1856 (The Ending Homelessness Act of 2019), would single-handedly begin to reverse the long-standing trend of disinvestment in California and nationwide. By investing \$750 million in permanent supportive housing alone across our country, programs that are desperate for funding to keep up with the need for affordable and permanent supportive housing can once again contemplate having the ability to provide units for those that need them. The potential passage of this bill would serve as a welcome re-engagement by federal government to serve all Americans who deserve a roof over their heads, for the simple fact of living in a country that should provide for all of us.

This bill would also fund much-needed incremental housing choice vouchers, which is a critical tool to make our supportive housing programs work locally and to provide deeply affordable housing for our most vulnerable families. Nationally, we saw that when Congress agrees to fund incremental vouchers for homeless veterans, veterans homelessness began to be eliminated in many states, and indeed declined in Los Angeles.

These programs work. However, they are woefully underfunded and have been for decades. We believe HR 1856 will stem and change the tide of these trends that have in part led to the homelessness crisis we see today.

Conclusion

I thank you for giving us—the City of Los Angeles and my Administration—the opportunity to review our work in ending homelessness in this great City. With the leadership of Chairwoman Waters and Members of this Committee, we look forward to seeing what Congress can and will accomplish in the years ahead in helping us to end this crisis. We need your help, now, to keep Angelenos safe, healthy, and housed.



DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER
Every woman housed

House Financial Services Committee: Field Hearing on Homelessness Testimony

August 14, 2019

Good morning members of the House Financial Services Committee. My name is Erika Hartman and I am the Chief Program Officer of the Downtown Women's Center. For over 40 years the Downtown Women's center has been providing housing and vital services to women in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles, and today serves over 4,000 women per year County-wide. In recent years we have seen homelessness in Los Angeles rise to unprecedented levels, and according to the 2019 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Point in Time Count (PIT), in Skid Row, the number of women increased by 3%, while county wide it increased by 13%, reaching 18,337 individual women. Homelessness among women is increasing nationally as well, according to the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) PIT 2017–2018, the number of women experiencing homelessness increased by 3%; across the Nation, on any given night 216,211 women are experiencing homelessness. Women comprise 39% of individuals experiencing homelessness, and 106,871 (49%) are women experiencing homelessness as individuals and do not qualify for services for families (HUD PIT 2017–2018).

The Downtown Women's Center exists because we recognize that women are a subpopulation of people experiencing homelessness and have corresponding unique needs. Homelessness is a dangerous and traumatic experience for women. Women living on the streets are a uniquely vulnerable population requiring specific attention and resources. For this reason, we continue to advocate for HUD to officially recognize women as a unique subpopulation. Over the past few years, the federal government has worked to address the unique needs of specific subpopulations within the overall homeless population, including, veterans, families, youth, and the chronically homeless. Data has shown that this targeting of resources, is much more effective in reducing numbers than a "one-size-fits-all" approach. One group that has not been identified as a subpopulation is unaccompanied women. Unaccompanied women are individuals who are not accompanied by children or dependents and who do not qualify for family resources. By not distinguishing unaccompanied women as a subpopulation we continue to see insufficient funding allocated to effectively address their homelessness, and to ensure that their unique needs are factored into service delivery. As examples of the unique

vulnerabilities faced by unaccompanied women, across both the sheltered and unsheltered population, individual women were over four times more likely to be chronically homeless and nearly twice as likely to have a mental illness, compared with women in families (LAHSA PIT 2018).

We are calling on our elected officials, as well as the administration of HUD, to classify unaccompanied women as a recognized subpopulation within the overall homeless population, and to provide appropriate guidance and resources to communities to deal with this large and growing population, including requiring the use of evidence-based practices such as Trauma-Informed Care.

Making this distinction could play a pivotal role in moving the needle on the issue of women's homelessness, most notably by 1) increasing data and research; 2) targeting services and housing towards women; and 3) requiring that gender competency, and program evaluation, be a criterion to receiving funding for housing and service provision:

1. Having national data on women's homelessness is an essential step to developing targeted, and thereby more effective, approaches to ending homelessness. A first step would be to require Continuums of Care to track and report data on women, including:
 - a. Tracking and reporting data disaggregated by gender in the PIT Homeless Count
 - b. Disaggregating by gender data from the demographic surveys conducted alongside the PIT Homeless Count
 - c. Adding questions specific to women and their experience of trauma and services in the demographic surveys conducted alongside the PIT Homeless Count
 - d. Reporting on gender parity of housing placements using the Homeless Management Information System data
2. Ensuring housing and services are being targeted toward women is critical to reducing homelessness among this subpopulation. Acknowledging the unique vulnerabilities faced by women, such as exposure to violence, could be included into the vulnerability scoring of individuals entered into the Coordinated Entry System (CES), for example:
 - a. Gender alone could be factored into vulnerability scoring
 - b. Gender paired with a past experience of trauma or violence could be factored into vulnerability scoring

3. Requiring communities to strategically address women's homelessness would result in improved and increased services to this undeserved population, and should be factored into funding decision. HUD could require applicants to demonstrate how they are effectively addressing the unique needs of unaccompanied women experiencing homeless, as part of their criteria for funding decisions. A sample question for inclusion in funding applications could be, *"How does your project or program address gender-specific needs?"*

At the Downtown Women's Center, we serve anyone who identifies as female or was identified female at birth, and for this reason, we are strong advocates for maintaining the Equal Access rule without changes; but would otherwise support House Bill H.R. 3018 - Ensuring Equal Access to Shelter Act of 2019. In the data gathered in the 2016 Downtown Women's Needs Assessment, spearheaded by the Downtown Women's Center, we found that women experiencing homelessness on Skid Row identify as LGBTQ+ at a rate of 15.4%, with 7.8% identifying as transgender, compared with 3.4% of American adults who self-identify as LGBTQ+, according to the Williams Institute. For this reason, we feel strongly about the importance of ensuring equal protections to all individuals in accessing homeless services.

In the Downtown Women's Needs Assessment, we also found that more than 90 percent of women residing in Skid Row had experienced some form of violence during their lifetime, including 68% who had experienced child abuse, and 55% who have experienced domestic violence. Data taken from Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool scores, from across the country between 2015-2018, and analyzed by the California Policy Lab, found that 80% of unsheltered women report that abuse or trauma is the cause of their current spell of homelessness, which is over 40% higher than the sheltered population of men and women, as well as over 40% higher than unsheltered men. This same data set found that, unsheltered Latinas are especially vulnerable and are 10%-15% more likely than other races or ethnicities to be impacted by negative relationships, legal barriers to housing, and risk of exploitation.

For this reason, we support H.R. 6545 - Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018 to provide vital protections and programs that support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and human trafficking. The House Financial Services Committee's support of H.R. 6545 advances the enactment of new improvements, including, strengthening housing protections for survivors, supporting expansions of prevention and education programs; and closing loopholes to reduce gun violence related to domestic violence; all of which are of critical importance to homelessness prevention and intervention for women. We are also advocating for the release of additional funds from the Victims of Crime

Act Fund (VOCA): Over 4,000 agencies rely on VOCA to provide services to nearly 4 million crime victims annually. We urge Congress to release \$2.6 billion from the VOCA fund.

As we know, women in the military experience high rates of sexual harassment and assault, making them vulnerable to retaliation and targets for “Other than Honorable” (OTH) discharges. 10% of homeless veterans have received OTH discharges, and while they are eligible for Supportive Services for Veteran Families and Grant Per Diem, which focuses on short-term, crisis intervention when providing homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing, they are not eligible to receive Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD- VASH) program vouchers, “which provides permanent supportive housing assistance for homeless veterans, prioritizing chronically homeless and highly vulnerable veterans, who have a high level of housing and service needs, such as those with high barriers to employment and self-sufficiency” (National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)). For this reason, we ask for the House Financial Services Committee’s support in advancing H.R. 2398 – Expanding Eligibility for HUD-VASH to Military Personnel Discharged with an “Other than Honorable” Basis.

Even with the level of risks that we know women face on the streets, according to the 2019 LAHSA PIT count, 64% of women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles City were unsheltered, meaning they are sleeping on the streets, in parks, vehicles, and in other places not fit for human habitation. In the 2019 Housing Gap Analysis, a new report produced by the Downtown Women’s Center, in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles and University of Southern California, which surveyed women experiencing homelessness across Los Angeles City, to assess their demographics, housing status and most urgent service needs, we found alarmingly low rates of available shelter. Of the 4,842 women across Los Angeles seeking emergency shelter each night, just one in every 12 is able to access a shelter bed. Currently, the existing supply of shelter beds is inadequate to house even a small fraction of this subpopulation that experiences violence and life-threatening conditions on a regular basis. In Los Angeles City, there are an estimated 799 emergency shelter beds available to individual adults, of those, only 405 total are available to individual women. Unsheltered women are more likely, at a rate of 57%, to have experienced domestic violence, compared with sheltered women, who report exposure to domestic violence at a rate of 37%. Additionally, VI-SPDAT data has also shown that on average, unsheltered women remain without stable housing for 14-16 years, compared to an average of 5 years for unsheltered men. For this reason, we must address the problem of homelessness by both providing more shelter and increasing access to affordable housing, with targeted attention to the unique needs of women.

It is not surprising that health and mortality rates are significantly impacted by homelessness. Women who are unsheltered age close to 20 years faster than their housed counterparts. Since

2014 homelessness in Los Angeles County has increased by 39%, but the rate at which homeless people are dying on the street has increased by 76%. According to an analysis of county coroner data by Kaiser Health News, in Los Angeles County, between 2014-2018 the number of deaths among homeless women more than doubled. While the life expectancy for women is typically longer than for men, in California in 2016 life expectancy for housed women was 83 and 79 for housed men, women experiencing homelessness have a shorter life expectancy than men. In 2016, in Los Angeles County, the average age of death for women experiencing homelessness was 48, compared with 51 for homeless men. For this reason, it is crucial that H.R.1978 – Fighting Homelessness with Services and Housing Act, receives the necessary support from the House Financial Services Committee, to ensure that the Health Resources and Services Administration department provides grants that address the need for comprehensive health care for homeless individuals. We also hope to see more House Members cosponsor and move forward with H.R. 3272 – Services for Ending Long Term Homelessness Act to provide much needed resources through grants from the Department of Health and Human Services, to serve people with “physical or mental health conditions or substance use disorders,” and provide health care and supportive housing.

A lack of housing affordability, and unemployment or underemployment is the most significant driver into homelessness in Los Angeles (2019 LAHSA PIT Count). The 2019 LAHSA PIT count found that among individuals experiencing homelessness, 53% identified “Economic Hardship” as the cause of their homelessness. In Los Angeles, since 2013, we have seen rents increase by over 30% during the same period of time that income has gone down by 3%. Income inequity bares especially hard on women who even in 2019 continue to make only \$0.79 for each dollar earned by men. Women of color are most significantly impacted by income inequity and earn on average \$21,000 – \$26,000 less per year compared to White men. The 2019 LAHSA PIT count highlighted the vast disproportionality by race of individuals experiencing homelessness, with 33.3% of homeless individuals in Los Angeles County identifying as African Americans, compare to 8.3% of the general population County-wide. We know that disproportionality in homelessness is not a coincidence and is the result of institutional racism: people of color are paid less and offered fewer jobs, putting them at greater risk for housing instability, and also experience significant discrimination in the criminal justice system. The lack of off-ramps from incarceration and into jobs and housing have left many people of color unable to exit the cycle of homelessness. African American women are the most significantly impacted by histories of incarceration when seeking employment. The Prison Policy Initiative reports that unemployment for African American women in reentry is 43.6%, compared with 35.2% for African American men, 23.2% for White women, and 18.4% for White men. People of color have fewer opportunities to access a quality education or quality healthcare due to systemic divestment from their communities. All of these factors contribute to the crisis of homelessness. We must be explicit in our discussion of the racial dimensions of homelessness for women if we are to address the disproportionate rates at which people of color are falling into homelessness. Although more could be revealed about the experience of homeless women

of color and those facing housing instability, through existing data collected by the HUD required Homelessness Information Management System, currently, no national breakdown based on race or ethnicity for women experiencing homelessness exists.

We do know that individual female households are more likely to be “rent-burdened” (paying more than 30% of their incomes on housing costs) and “extremely rent-burdened” (paying more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs), compared to other renter households. Additionally, nearly 70% of households comprised of women living alone were considered to be, at a minimum, rent burdened in 2016, meaning more than 30% of their income went toward housing (2019 Housing Gap Analysis).

Women comprise a significant portion of single parent households and stand to be impacted by the HUD proposed changes to the Mixed Status rule, forcing families to choose between their loved ones and homelessness, based on the individual immigration status of their family members. For this reason, in the event that HUD moves forward with the proposed change to the Mixed Status rule, we support H.R. 2763 - Keeping Families Together Act, to prevent 25,000 households (11,000 of which are in Los Angeles) from facing imminent eviction.

Homelessness is a matter of resources, and individuals with resources are better equipped to surmount the primary drivers into homelessness and have a better chance of being able to exit. For that reason, ongoing support of H.R. 3163 – Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act 2020 is essential to ending homelessness; we need at least \$3 billion dollars for Homeless Assistance grants for fiscal year 2020. In a similar vein, H.R. 1856 – The Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 would provide vital resources to communities working to address the homeless crisis. The rate at which people are falling into homelessness is outpacing the rate at which they are exiting, and the \$2.65 billion investment over five years would significantly increase the likelihood that organizations serving the homeless will have the opportunity to get ahead of the curve in meeting the need. Permanent Authorization of HUD’s McKinney – Vento Act and elimination of the sunset clause for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness are important steps towards ending the homeless crisis. We are at a point where we can no longer rely on “discretionary” spending and need to protect our progress and gain more ground through “mandatory” spending, with the flexibility to meet the unique needs of Continuums of Care. The House Financial Services Committee’s support of this bill has moved us in the right direction to solidify this critically significant legislation and we hope to see more “House Members cosponsor this bill, as an indication of support for funding effective homeless interventions to the scale needed” (NAEH).

At the Downtown Women’s Center, we envision a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. It is our mission to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy. We will push to end women’s homelessness and ensure that every woman is housed, by continuing our work to improve

access to both short- and long-term forms of supportive housing and services across every neighborhood of Los Angeles County.

TESTIMONY OF MONIQUE KING-VIEHLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

PRESENTED TO THE
FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FIELD HEARING: EXAMINING THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES
AUGUST 14, 2019

Chairwoman Waters, Ranking Member McHenry, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the homelessness crisis, an extremely important issue that affects thousands of men, women, and children across Los Angeles County.

My name is Monique King-Viehlend, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA). The LACDA, previously known as the Community Development Commission/Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, is an established, trusted community leader in the core areas of housing, community development, and economic development. For the past 36 years, the agency has made a difference across the County by preserving single-family homes; creating affordable rental housing opportunities for veterans, families, and persons experiencing homelessness; funding and constructing parks, libraries, and other public facilities; and providing support to help businesses – small and large – start up or continue to grow. We are resolute in our mission to Build Better Lives and Better Neighborhoods, as well as our endeavors to end generational poverty and homelessness, encourage community development, and empower County residents and businesses to reach their full potential.

Homelessness Crisis

Los Angeles County is simultaneously home to one of the largest homeless populations and one of the most unaffordable rental markets in the country. At any given time, nearly 60,000¹ men, women, and children suffer the devastating effects of homelessness, with the majority of them living unsheltered on our streets, serving as a visual reminder of decades worth of failed policies, discriminatory housing and lending practices, and underinvestment of local, state, and federal resources. These issues, coupled with years of increased housing costs, stagnant wages, and a deficit of more than 500,000² affordable rental units means that even those who are fortunate enough to obtain housing are often spending unsustainable portions of their household income toward housing costs. In fact, there are over 700,000³ households in Los Angeles County who are “severely rent burdened,” meaning they spend more than 50% of their household income toward rent. Los Angeles County leadership, recognizing the need for a collaborative, sustained effort to combat and end homelessness, passed a sweeping set of strategies which comprise the County’s Homeless Initiative. Approved in February 2016, the Initiative covers six (6) major areas: preventing homelessness, subsidizing housing, increasing income, providing case management and services, creating a coordinated system, and increasing the supply of affordable and homeless housing. In 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors proposed, and voters approved, the Measure H ballot initiative, a quarter cent sales tax for Los Angeles County, generating approximately \$355 million annually to support the implementation of the Homeless Initiative. The LACDA is fully engaged in the County’s plan, serving as a lead or collaborative agency on 27 of the 51 individual strategies.

¹ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2019 Homeless Count

² California Housing Partnership Corporation (May 2019) LA County Affordable Outcomes Report

³ Joint Center for Housing Study of Harvard University, “The State of the Nation’s Housing” 2018

Using a combination of local, state, and federal resources, the LACDA administers several programs that provide housing opportunities for lower income families, the elderly, the disabled, youth transitioning out of foster care, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness, especially our homeless veterans. Moreover, the LACDA serves as the second largest Public Housing Agency (PHA) in Southern California and receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer several grant-funded rental subsidy programs. Outlined below are the affordable housing programs administered by the LACDA, available to County residents.

Housing Assistance

The LACDA administers federal rental assistance programs such as the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Continuum of Care Program for homeless individuals and families with a disability, and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program for homeless veterans, providing rental assistance for approximately 25,000 families. In light of the magnitude of the homelessness crisis, the LACDA recognized that it needed to take a bold step in using all of the resources at its disposal to meet this crisis head on and decided to create a homeless preference that dedicates 100% of its Section 8 turnover vouchers to our homeless Angelenos. Despite the fact that this is the most difficult population to serve and that the Section 8 Program fundamentally dis-incentivizes housing authorities from serving this population, we forged ahead and removed barriers to access by reducing our background checks to the HUD minimum. We created partnerships with the 18 other housing authorities operating in the County to align our policies and streamline access, and we leveraged local resources to develop creative, flexible solutions that restricted federal dollars did not allow. For example, we created the Homeless Incentive Program, or HIP, to remove barriers to access for our voucher holders that were finding it next to impossible to use their voucher to secure a unit. HIP allows us to engage property owners to secure their rental units in exchange for a monetary incentive while qualified renters with a voucher are referred to the owner. We also assist clients with funding to pay for security deposits, utility fees, move-in expenses, and a damage mitigation fund, which provides owners with a safety net to cover the costs of damages to the unit. Further, each client receives access to County-funded intensive case management services to help with the transition and any ongoing supportive service needs. In fact, the LACDA administered approximately \$18 million in the first two (2) years of Measure H, and these resources helped over 1,924 individuals and families find a home through this strategy. Additionally, we leveraged our partnerships to expand this program which now supports eight (8) other PHAs in the County who have replicated HIP, with LACDA providing oversight and technical assistance, leading to an additional 825 individuals and families housed over the same period.

In 2015, the LACDA worked with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to address years of declining federal funding to maintain 241 public housing units, at the South Scattered Sites. The LACDA agreed to forgo disposition of these properties in exchange for \$6 million in County funding to address the capital improvement deficit. Additionally, we agreed to implement a homeless preference granting priority admission to units that become available through turnover, to homeless individuals and families referred by the County's Coordinated Entry System (CES). Families referred to the South Scattered Sites are provided with ongoing intensive case management services funded by Measure H tax revenue. Since the implementation of this homeless preference, the LACDA has housed 34 individuals and families. It should be noted that aside from this targeted preference, we have found that nearly 25% of all new families coming into public housing in general, were homeless at the time of entry.

Further, the LACDA collaborates with the Department of Children and Family Services on the Family Reunification Strategy, part of the County's Homeless Initiative, which reunites children with their family when the only barrier to reunification is lack of housing. Providing rapid re-housing funding for up to 18 months using Measure H tax revenue to reunify families instead of placing children in foster care, creates substantial financial savings in addition to the positive benefits the family experiences by being stabilized in housing. Additionally, the savings generated from providing housing assistance in lieu of foster care placement are reinvested into the strategy, allowing more families to be served. Since the program's inception, we have received 523 referral families including 786 children, of which we have enrolled 456 families, and successfully housed 177 families including 404 children.

Looking ahead, the LACDA will implement the Landlord Customer Service Team (LCST) in early 2020 to meet the service needs of all landlords participating in the LACDA rental assistance programs. Building on extensive dialogue between LACDA and local property owner associations in Los Angeles County, the LCST will focus on landlord retention, increased outreach to new and existing landlords, education, owner-tenant conflict resolution, and overall program satisfaction. Additionally, the LCST will utilize County funding to administer new incentives for landlords including, unit holding fees, vacancy loss payments, and unit damage mitigation fees in recognition that property owners are an integral partner in expanding housing opportunities for our clients.

Housing Development

As the County's affordable housing development arm, we provide capital funding and rental assistance for the creation of new affordable housing. In fact, over the past five (5) years, the County has provided \$294 million in capital subsidy for the development of affordable housing, leveraging \$2.3 billion in public and private funds. In the same timeframe, more than 4,200 affordable units were funded, with 2/3 of those units reserved for people struggling with homelessness, mental illness, persons with disabilities, chronic homelessness, and HIV/AIDS. This year alone, we will fund more than five (5) times the number of units we funded back in 2014.

Recently, the LACDA, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), released both its highly anticipated \$207 million No Place Like Home (NPLH) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and its LACDMH Alternative Housing NOFA. NPLH authorizes an issuance of \$2 billion in bond proceeds at the state level, to be repaid with funding from the Mental Health Services Act Fund to provide capital subsidy for the development of supportive housing. Ultimately, the County of Los Angeles expects to administer more than \$700 million in NPLH funds that will be used to house our most vulnerable residents, potentially producing up to 5,400 special needs units and 1,000 low-income units. The Alternative Housing NOFA made available \$11.5 million in LACDA/LACDMH Mental Health Services Act funds for the acquisition, new construction, and/or rehabilitation of permanent supportive housing that does not use Low-Income Housing Tax Credit financing.

Additionally, the LACDA has collaborated with the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning and the Department of Arts and Culture to develop and administer an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot. The Pilot will expedite the review and approval of ADUs, offer technical assistance to homeowners, and provide County incentives to assist homeowners in constructing new ADUs or preserving existing, unpermitted ADUs in exchange for providing long-term affordability covenants, or requiring recipients to

accept Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. Using \$550k in Homeless Initiative funds, the monetary assistance for homeowners in this small Pilot are in the form of loans that are forgiven over time provided that the homeowner leases the ADU to a homeless individual or family.

Finally, the LACDA, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office of Los Angeles County, serves as the contract administrator for five (5) innovative housing proposals selected through a Housing Innovation Challenge. Winning designs were selected based on a criteria that focused on creative solutions that result in more cost-effective, expeditious development that are achievable in a reasonable timeframe, scalable to become a model that has impact on a large scale, and provides meaningful solutions that address homelessness in a transformative and dignified way. Four (4) of the proposals were awarded \$1 million and one (1) proposal received \$500k. Selected proposals include a neighborhood equity model that allows the surrounding community to invest in housing development, standardized garage conversions, and several innovative prefab, modular, and kit of parts designs. Once completed, these units will be home to homeless individuals and families.

Tenant Protections

In light of the large number of households that are severely rent burdened in Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, with input from LACDA, passed a temporary Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) in December 2018, which has been extended to December 2019. The ordinance temporarily prohibits rent increases in excess of 3% above monthly rent with exemptions for single-family residences, condominiums, and housing constructed after February 1, 1995. The ordinance prohibits more than one (1) rent increase in any 12-month period. The temporary RSO also includes a rent increase process for owners who believe they are not receiving a fair rate of return on their property.

Additionally, the RSO has a provision requiring just cause for evictions such as failure to pay rent, material breach of rental agreement, failure to provide reasonable access to the rental unit, creating a nuisance or using the unit for illegal purposes, or if the owner or their family intends to move in the unit.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors also passed an anti-housing Income Discrimination Ordinance in April 2019, stemming from a 2018 study from HUD that indicated that prospective tenants with vouchers are denied housing over 75% of the time. The ordinance bars owners from disqualifying a prospective tenant solely based on their source of income, but does not force landlords to rent to voucher holders.

In addition to the ordinance, the County has committed \$5 million to fund the creation of a database to track evictions, study displacement, and evaluate the feasibility of using incentives to increase landlord acceptance of subsidized housing. This funding would also support educational programs focused on housing rights.

These policies are preventive measures that aim to slow down the tremendous inflow of families that are falling into homelessness and to address the negative effects of housing insecurity that are caused by large rent increases and evictions.

Congressional Assistance

Despite these creative solutions, and while an unprecedented number of affordable and supportive units are in construction and being funded, the inflow, due to a myriad of institutional and systemic issues, racial and social class disparities, and lack of economic growth and mobility, continues to conflate our efforts. Although the homeless delivery system contributed to 134 people exiting homelessness per day last year, approximately 150 fell into homelessness. This requires a multi-system approach that includes intersections within and outside of the homeless delivery system.

While we are committed to fully implementing the aforementioned programs to help house the homeless, we look to our elected officials for specific actions to help address this crisis. We request support in sustaining or increasing funding for vital federal programs, and providing administrative flexibility to effectively administer programs that offer housing assistance to residents with limited means. For example, the Administration's Federal Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposal eliminates funding for the Public Housing Capital Fund (CF). The CF has been continually underfunded for years, compounding the backlog of repairs. The LACDA faces a growing backlog of deferred maintenance needs which is currently projected at \$109 million for the next 20 years. Eliminating the CF will leave the agency with no resources to address even basic repair needs.

Additionally, human capital driven programs have been consistently underfunded. The LACDA's Operating Fund (OF) subsidy allocation has been at an 85% - 90% proration for the past four (4) years. The agency can no longer support and maintain its housing with insufficient OFs. Further, for Federal Fiscal Year 2020, the Administration proposed \$1.718 billion for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher administrative fee, which the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials estimates to be a 71% proration.

We also seek administrative flexibility and streamlining in several areas, which would improve our ability to administer programs in a more cost-effective manner. For example, Moving to Work (MTW), which was authorized by Congress in 1996, has three (3) statutory goals: achieve greater cost effectiveness; promote economic self-sufficiency; and, increase housing choices for low-income families. The MTW program provides the flexibility PHAs like ours need to operate their agencies more effectively by cutting costs, creating ways to raise new revenue, and developing community-level partnerships to support locally-determined priorities. Unfortunately, due to our size, the LACDA is not allowed to participate in MTW.

We fully support the Administration providing PHAs flexibilities to maximize the ability to service distinct clients and reforms to streamline program operations. We encourage HUD and Congress to work with PHAs on this effort since, for large PHAs, implementing new regulatory measures entails extensive staff re-training and system changes, sometimes for negligible returns.

Additionally, the LACDA requests Housing Choice Voucher Set-Aside funding, and encourages HUD to replicate the same approach used for the redistribution of PHAs' unused budget authority to set-aside funding for PHAs in high cost areas that serve special needs populations, and that have leveraged local resources. As I stated earlier, the Section 8 Program as currently structured, dis-incentivizes housing agencies from serving this population. For example, LACDA's per unit cost to house a homeless client is

50% higher than a non-homeless client, therefore, we cannot serve as many households. This in turn leads to lower administrative fees to operate the program due to the funding formula which penalizes an agency for choosing to be bold and serving the most vulnerable among us. The opposite should be true; agencies should be rewarded for taking such risks and administrative fees should be increased for these agencies in recognition of the complexities involved with properly serving homeless clients. Serving special needs populations in high cost areas, such as the homeless in Los Angeles County, requires additional funding resources outside of the traditional Housing Assistance Payment and limited administrative fees. Local jurisdictions who have leveraged local revenue, such as the Los Angeles County Measure H revenue, should receive support from HUD, to encourage creative solutions to complex issues.

Further, the LACDA encourages HUD to incorporate a regionalized waiver approach for Los Angeles County. HUD has openly encouraged regional approaches, but those efforts are targeted to rural areas. Urban areas that have strong partnerships such as ours should be rewarded for eliminating jurisdictional barriers and aligning policies to address the affordable housing crisis. Any waiver submitted by the LACDA and granted by HUD, should also be applicable to any PHA within the County who chooses to adopt it. It doesn't make sense to force a small PHA with limited resources to have to navigate the waiver process on their own when a neighboring agency has already obtained the exact same waiver. The LACDA serves as the lead PHA in Los Angeles County, convening quarterly forums with attendance by the other 18 PHAs within the County. Discussions regarding waivers occur on a broader scale; as such, waivers requested would be beneficial to more than one (1) PHA and would encourage even greater policy alignment within the County for the benefit of all.

Finally, we are often prevented from fully participating in coordinated efforts to house homeless clients because the federal privacy act bars us from sharing any information with partner agencies without previous written consent for each adult. Given the size and complexity of the County's CES, clients do not have the luxury of time to circulate the required authorization to release information documents between various partner agencies. Given the large geography of Los Angeles County (spanning over 4,000 square miles) and the transient nature of the homeless population, the LACDA cannot maximize the effectiveness of this coordinated approach.

Therefore, LACDA requests that Congress authorize PHAs, with the goal of facilitating the expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of homeless individuals to housing and supportive services within that PHA's jurisdiction, to share with public and private homeless services provider agencies, confidential information, for the purpose of coordinating housing and supportive services to ensure continuity of care.

In closing, the activity outlined in this testimony is indicative of the forward thinking, collaborative approach that has fueled the momentum of our fight to end homelessness. While we have built a system that allows us to house thousands of individuals and families in need, many thousands more fall into homelessness, primarily due to financial reasons. The solutions to these problems are varied, and while many of the solutions fall outside the arena of housing, we cannot afford to ignore the pressing need to continue and even increase our current efforts, which is impossible without significant investment from all levels of government. The \$1 billion in funding proposed in H.R. 1856: Ending Homelessness Act of 2019, introduced by Representative Waters, is an excellent example of the type of federal investment needed to combat this crisis.

Again, the LACDA stands resolute in its mission to Build Better Lives and Better Neighborhoods. We will continue to advocate for policies and funding that allow for the development of new affordable housing, preservation of existing affordable housing, supportive services for individuals and families in need, additional housing subsidies, and the programmatic flexibility to maximize their effectiveness, as well as protections for clients that allow them to find and retain affordable housing.

Thank you again for the invitation to address this urgent matter.



**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
FIELD HEARING ON AUGUST 14, 2019
"EXAMINING THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES"**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY
MARGARITA LARES, CHIEF PROGRAMS OFFICER
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES (HACLA)**

Thank you, members of the Committee on Financial Services, for inviting the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles to provide a written testimony and to speak today regarding the humanitarian crisis in Los Angeles. Thank you for introducing the H.R.1856 The Ending Homelessness Act of 2019. A special recognition to Congresswoman and Chair of the Committee, Maxine Waters, for being a strong, vocal, and persistent champion for our community.

HACLA supports H.R. 1856 and in particular the allocation and funding formula as described in the bill. So that communities with the highest need, like Los Angeles, receive the appropriate resource. This is both the most effective and efficient use of scarce federal funding. HACLA further supports the concept that priority for federal assistance should be given to communities in which local governments, like Los Angeles, have adopted policies to aid in ending and preventing homelessness.

The Los Angeles community has stepped to the plate by taking a collective approach in building and preserving affordable housing, committing ongoing rental assistance, and increasing supportive services. This commitment was further solidified when the voters of Los Angeles approved Proposition HHH in the City and Measure H in the County. Proposition HHH, approved on November 8, 2016, is a \$1.2 billion Homelessness Reduction

and Prevention, Housing and Facilities Bond, which will support the development of 10,000 new permanent supportive housing units within the City. Measure H approved on March 7, 2017, funds supportive services, housing, outreach and prevention for people experiencing homelessness. This quarter percent sales tax is expected to raise \$3.55 billion over a ten-year period. Notwithstanding these additional resources, the City and County saw an increase in homelessness in 2019. While we believe that local governments and organizations must play a part in the solution, we need the federal government to be a partner in this effort.

For 10 years HACLA has taken on the battle to end homelessness and to preserve affordable housing by using federal rental subsidies such as Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (vouchers). HACLA has implemented policies giving priority to veterans/homeless veterans; homeless families, youth, and individuals; and committed vouchers for permanent supportive housing which has led to 19,500 rental subsidies being utilized to house formerly homeless households. Without this assistance, the count of homeless individuals would today be greater. Continuing in this effort, in 2017, following the passing of HHH and H by Los Angeles voters, HACLA committed an additional 5,000 project-based vouchers for permanent supportive housing. Within 2 years HACLA will be utilizing nearly 40 percent of its resources to house people experiencing homelessness.

Besides the 36,165 people experiencing homelessness in the City, based on the 2019 Point-in-Time count, there are 18,000 households on the voucher wait list. In fact, in October 2017, when HACLA opened a wait list for vouchers, 188,000 households registered for assistance, but the number had to be reduced to 20,000 via a lottery process. There are 51,000

households registered on the wait list for public housing. At minimum 250,000 households are looking to HACLA for hope. Clearly HACLA cannot keep up with the demand without additional resources from the federal government.

HACLA needs more vouchers **but with the appropriate funding levels** for the Los Angeles area. The high cost of housing and low income of voucher holders in Los Angeles require more federal funds. Currently, HACLA is expending 100% of its federal budget authority but only able to utilize 93% of the vouchers. The average rental payments have increased by 20% over the last four years because of continued increases in the rental market while the incomes of voucher holders have dropped or remained the same. In fact, the average annual income for voucher program participants is \$16,953 or \$1,412 monthly. Yet, the 2019 HUD published fair market rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles is \$1,384 per month. The reality is that rental costs are high, and incomes are low.

Voucher holders do not have disposable income to pay for rents let alone move-in costs such as security deposits, utility start up fees, and rental application fees. In response to this barrier the City and County Housing Authorities, utilizing the Homeless Incentive Program (HIP) funded by Measure H, pays move-in costs and other monetary incentives to property owners to facilitate successful housing for voucher holders experiencing homelessness. This is another example of how the local community is collaborating and contributing.

With less than 3% of availability in rental units, the success rate in finding a place to live has dropped to 53% for households with a voucher. This is especially heartbreaking for

individuals that have been unsheltered or waited years on the waitlist for a voucher, only to return the voucher or have it expire. This is happening even though HACLA is determining rents at 110% of the fair market rents for the regular vouchers and 140% of the fair market rents for the veteran targeted vouchers. The vouchers are not paying what the market demands for the very limited rental stock that currently exists.

HACLA's inability to utilize 100% of its vouchers is having a negative financial impact on the agency. The housing authority funds its program operations which include determining participant eligibility, conducting inspections of housing to ensure safe and sanitary conditions, and leasing activities with property owners with federally provided administrative fees for each voucher. With the drop of voucher utilization from 100% to 93%, HACLA is now receiving less administrative dollars. The loss of revenue is further compounded because only 79% of the determined fees required to properly administer the program are received due to a proration factor in the current funding formula.

While the focus of H.R. 1856 is on ending homelessness, it is also important to support affordable housing for all who need it. Homeless prevention is a vital piece, as the homeless problem will continue to grow if the number of people becoming homeless grows faster than we can house them.

Under federal regulations, a public housing authority may choose to project base up to 20% of its vouchers and an additional 10% of its vouchers if they are to be used to house people experiencing homelessness among other specified populations. This a long-term rental subsidy contract that facilitates development of housing with supportive services for targeted

populations. As you are aware permanent supportive housing is the most appropriate for people experiencing homelessness, and to prevent recidivism. HACLA is currently project basing over 20% of its vouchers but will reach the allowable cap given the number of vouchers being committed to HHH projects. New permanent supportive housing needs the operating support from a Section 8 voucher to work. HACLA is rapidly reaching its limits of vital Section 8 assistance. An additional allocation of vouchers from the federal government would make it feasible for HACLA to commit even more vouchers to new permanent supportive housing projects. Although the goal of HHH is to develop 10,000 new units, the reality is that even more units are needed. Without federal subsidies these projects will not come to fruition, nor can be sustained on a long-term basis.

In closing, HACLA appreciates the opportunity to testify on the Homelessness Crisis in Los Angeles and is available to provide any additional information. HACLA cordially extends an invitation to the members of the Committee to visit HACLA and see first-hand not only the struggles but also the progress that is being made. Certainly, with more federal subsidies, more individuals can be housed.

Respectfully submitted.



TESTIMONY OF
PETER LYNN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY

BEFORE THE
HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Good morning, Chairwoman Waters, and esteemed members of the House Financial Services Committee. My name is Peter Lynn, and I am the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to address you today on the issue of homelessness, and especially appreciative to be able to do so here in Los Angeles. In the communities surrounding Exposition Park, where we sit today, we can see firsthand both the significant challenges that lie ahead of us as we seek to stabilize thousands of our neighbors, but also the monumental progress that we are making in this effort.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is the lead administrative agency in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, the country's largest Continuum of Care (CoC), which encompasses 85 cities, over nine million residents, and over two thousand census tracts. The agency administers services and programs funded by the federal Continuum of Care program, along with programs funded by the City and County of Los Angeles and the State of California. Taken together, LAHSA administers over \$300 million in annual funding. In addition, LAHSA oversees the annual point-in-time count (PIT, or homeless count), has a staff of nearly two hundred outreach workers that are making contact with our houseless neighbors on a daily basis in every corner of the county, and provides policy design and implementation of the Coordinated Entry System.

We continue to face a moment of crisis here in Los Angeles. According to the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless, there are 58,936 people experiencing homelessness on any given night in Los Angeles County, a 12% increase from the 2018 PIT count. The PIT count is static number from three nights in January, but we know that homelessness is dynamic and ever-changing. We counted nearly 59,000 people, but our data indicates that about double that number, over 100,000 people, fell into homelessness at some point over the course of 2018.¹

As a community, Los Angeles has become far more effective at moving people out of homelessness and into housing. In 2018, the homeless system in Los Angeles County moved 21,631 people out of homelessness and into permanent housing. This is a 124% increase in the number of housing placements from just four years prior in 2014, when there were 9,658 people placed in permanent housing—we've more than doubled our capacity to house people. This progress is thanks to a combination of federal, local, and state resources, working in unprecedented coordination with each other and deployed by a growing network of dedicated community-based organizations.

But while the system has become far more effective and efficient at moving people out of homelessness and into housing, the forces driving people into homelessness continue to persist and overwhelm the available resources. At the core of these forces is housing affordability. Over 555,000 Los Angeles County households are paying more than half of their income on rent, accounting for about 17% of all Los Angeles County households. Two-thirds of those severely cost-burdened households, or 362,000 households, are extremely low-income (ELI) or below.ⁱⁱ For a family of three, "ELI" would mean they earn less than \$28,000 in income annually.ⁱⁱⁱ

All told, those 362,000 households are equivalent to upwards of one million Los Angeles County residents making less than \$28,000 annually and paying more than half of their income on rent. Those families are one disruption away from losing their housing—it could be an unexpected medical emergency, a car breaking down and causing a member of the household to miss work, or a landlord simply deciding to raise the rent beyond the family's breaking point. This staggering number of people living on the edge leads the California Housing Partnership to estimate that Los Angeles County needs an additional 517,000 housing units that are affordable to low-income households.^{iv}

Similar dynamics are pushing the numbers of people experiencing homelessness up through the State of California. Across California's 43 continuums of care, the average increase in this year's homeless count was 24%.

Angelenos continue to be alarmed by homelessness and the plight of their neighbors that are in crisis. Residents of the City of Los Angeles voted in 2016 to tax themselves with Proposition HHH, a \$1.2 billion bond measure to create thousands of units of supportive housing. Only months later, in March 2017, County residents voted to create a 0.25% sales tax, Measure H, to fund hundreds of millions in homeless services annually.

Yet despite these increased resources, our neighbors who are unhoused continue to spend too long waiting for housing, faced with the painful reality of too few housing resources to serve those that need them. Even as we build new supportive housing and

interim housing, the number of tents and makeshift shelters on the sidewalks continues to grow, as does the numbers of families living in their cars. While we have greatly increased the number of people housed out of homelessness, thousands more are becoming homeless or await a housing resource. And while the Los Angeles homeless count increase was lower than most of our neighboring continuums across the state, we still have by far the largest number of people in crisis statewide.

It is clear that we must do more at all levels of government, from our smallest cities in the county, all the way up to the federal level. But along the way, we would like to implore people to remember three critical points. First, since the beginning of 2017, when Angelenos voted to tax themselves, the service providers who comprise our system have housed nearly 40,000 people in Los Angeles County. That is 40,000 people who have found a place to call home where they can heal and build community. Despite all the challenges of our housing market, we have accelerated our ability to house people who are homeless.

Second, this is a crisis of housing affordability at its root, and until we take action to both stabilize people in their homes while increasing the housing stock that's affordable to low-income people, both subsidized and unsubsidized, homelessness will continue. Since 2000, wages have remained relatively flat, while housing costs have risen 32%. A minimum wage employee in Los Angeles County would have to work approximately 80 hours to afford a modest apartment. We cannot address homelessness without taking serious steps on the affordability challenges facing Angelenos.

Third, decades of racial discrimination in housing policy, employment, criminal justice enforcement, and just about every facet of our culture have led to a tremendously disproportionate overrepresentation of Black and African American people experiencing homelessness. There are a number of causes that drove this crisis at the local, state, and federal levels, and help explain why it has unfolded so acutely here in Los Angeles. For the purposes of this testimony, however, I will focus on three in particular. These are: 1) Decades of racist housing policy and redlining, both federally and locally, along with racist practices in real estate that have limited housing options and wealth-building opportunities for large portions of Los Angeles' population; 2) Declining federal investment in the housing programs that provide affordability and could help mitigate the impacts of racist housing policy, along with inequitable methodologies for the original and subsequent distribution of that funding; and 3) A criminal justice system which continues to overpolice and overincarcerate Black and Brown communities, leading to the self-reinforcing cycle of homelessness and criminal justice system involvement.

We must confront the legacy of racism in our housing markets and the ways in which federal policy has reinforced racism. This has manifested itself in a number of damaging ways. A history of segregation and redlining has severely curtailed the homeownership opportunities available to people of color, eliminating the possibility of the intergenerational transfer of wealth that Americans have traditionally used as an engine of upward mobility. This segregation was not caused by government policy alone, but U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) policies entrenched and enforced this segregation. By allowing mostly white Americans to benefit from subsidized mortgages while allowing lenders to “redline” communities of color,^v radically different rates of homeownership, divergent home values, and overall wealth building have emerged along racial lines. This inequity in wealth-building has also left communities of color and especially the Black and African American community more vulnerable to homelessness, as people who are renters have fewer resources to fall back on in times of emergency. This is one of the factors leading to an overrepresentation of Black and African American people experiencing homelessness: in 2019, 33% of Los Angeles County’s homeless population was Black or African American, compared to just 8% of the general population.

Racism has manifested itself in other ways. While de jure segregation has been dismantled, de facto segregation remains. Traditionally white, affluent neighborhoods have closed their doors to new development, especially affordable housing development. These areas have downzoned and maintained exclusionary zoning policies to prevent new housing from being built. Landlords and realtors continue to discriminate against people of color in subtle but sometimes overt ways. Text reading “No Section 8” continues to be prevalent in apartment listings. As a result, our Black and Brown neighbors searching for housing have far fewer choices than a white apartment-seeker might. Over the last five years, the average vacancy rate in Los Angeles County has been 3.2%,^{vi} which is a tight market for anyone seeking housing, no matter what race they are. But the racism inherent in our built environment and our real estate practices effectively mean that people of color face a far lower vacancy rate and even fiercer competition for scarce housing than that 3.2% vacancy rate indicates.

It is worth noting that state and local policies have exacerbated these trends, especially in California. Exclusionary zoning policies, such as minimum lot sizes and low-density zoning, have locked out more affordable housing modalities in affluent neighborhoods. The state has been loath to challenge cities that fail to meet their goals of zoning for and building housing that’s affordable to low-income people. Up until the end of 2017, the state made it illegal for cities to enact mandatory inclusionary zoning policies. The state still places significant restrictions on the types of rent stabilization a city can enact. California’s state housing and land use policies have been drivers of preserving segregation and incentivizing development patterns that leave marginalized people out

of the picture. To their credit, our leaders in Sacramento are finally having a serious conversation about these issues and are beginning to act.

But the federal government has not adequately accounted for its legacy of racist housing policies and the incalculable damage these policies have wrought on communities across the country. Serious policy change and investment is needed to begin to rectify the physical and financial landscape that racism has left us with. A significant strengthening of the Fair Housing Act, with strong enforcement provisions is a start, and as such, we cannot allow rules like Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing to be weakened. Strong support for homeownership programs for communities that have traditionally lacked access to conventional credit is vital, as is support for foreclosure prevention programs. Incentives and penalties for exclusionary communities to meet their affordable housing goals is also a needed complement to ensure all neighborhoods play a role in finding solutions. In addition, ensuring that federal housing programs are allowing and encouraging housing stock typologies that are affordable to people in poverty would help alleviate the high costs that many families face.

What federal resources we do have continue to be a driver of why homelessness looks so different in California as it does in other places. On the public housing side, one of the largest booms in public housing investments came after the passage of the Housing Act of 1937. At the time, New York City was already home to 7.5 million residents,^{vii} and at that point, thousands of public housing units that were built in the early twentieth century.^{viii} Los Angeles County's population in 1940 was only 2.8 million. Older East Coast cities with larger populations accelerated their public housing production in accordance with their needs and received larger shares of federal investment in their public housing than Western regions, where large population growth didn't start occurring until later in the twentieth century. By the time policymakers realized the impacts of these population shifts, the federal government had moved away from large scale investments in public housing and was moving to a period of relatively austerity in public investment.

As a result, Los Angeles County is home to 10,806 public housing units between the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), the Los Angeles County Community Development Authority (LACDA), and other smaller public housing authorities.^{ix} By comparison, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) administers 173,160 public housing units,^x despite New York City having a smaller population (8.6 million) than Los Angeles County (10.1 million). This lack of depth of public housing in Los Angeles means there are far fewer deeply affordable units, both for those who are at-risk of homelessness and for those that we seek to move out of homelessness and into a housing unit.

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, which have been a flexible tool to serve very low-income households with subsidies, have also not kept up with demand. There are about 94,000 Housing Choice Vouchers available or in use in Los Angeles County,^{xi} compared to about 757,000 very low-income households that are income-eligible,^{xii} or about one voucher for every eight households that qualify. In addition, funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program does not support full utilization of all vouchers. Local housing authorities in Los Angeles are at 100% of their budget utilization, but well below their full voucher utilization. With full funding, thousands of poor Angelenos could be housed that currently are not.

Other federal resources continue to favor older East Coast and Midwest cities in subtle ways—for example, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program considers the age of a Metropolitan Area’s housing stock as a major factor.^{xiii} This also tends to disadvantage Western metropolitan areas where the housing stock is younger than its Eastern counterparts, but where poverty is just as persistent. This leads to further inequity in federal funding allocations. In 2018, for example, the City of Chicago received a \$78.9 million allocation of CDBG funds, while the City of Los Angeles received \$53.7 million, despite the City of Los Angeles being home to 790,320 people living in poverty compared to 550,432 people living in poverty in the City of Chicago.^{xiv}

But in none of these locations, East, Midwest, or West, is federal investment in anti-poverty and housing programs sufficient to match the need. Despite recent small increases and stabilization of budgets in the CDBG program, public housing programs, or the HOME Investment Partnerships program (HOME), the long-term trend has been one of decline. Just in the last few years alone, the decline has continued even as housing costs have continued to rise; from 2009 to 2016, overall federal funding for affordable housing through the CDBG and HOME programs in Los Angeles County declined by 35%.

Nationally, our decades-long history of overincarceration and under-funding of ex-offender re-entry services has left hundreds of thousands of Americans with significant barriers as they seek to restore themselves to a productive life. Federal and local policymakers have played a role in erecting these barriers. According to 2017 Homeless Count data from Los Angeles, 63% of unsheltered adults have at some point been involved in the criminal justice system.

Formerly incarcerated people struggle to re-enter the job market, and to access housing, either market rate or that which is subsidized by federal and local sources of funding. They often face homelessness because of these challenges. Our history of mass incarceration also helps explain the severe disproportionate racial demographics of people who are homeless, both locally and nationally. Law enforcement is not

demographically neutral. In Los Angeles, African-Americans make up 8% of the general population, and 30% of our county jail population. Over the last several years, the percentage of people experiencing homelessness who are Black and African American in Los Angeles County has ranged from 33% to 40%; four to five times the representation in Los Angeles' general population. This is a legacy we need to address directly and vigorously.

There is more we can do locally, but also more the federal government can do to rectify these inequities. First, the federal government can increase investment in programs that fund housing that's affordable to extremely low-income people, and HUD is the agency best equipped to do that. While programs like the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program have been vital sources of affordable housing investment over recent decades and should be bolstered, these programs often fail to house those with the lowest incomes who are most at risk of falling into homelessness. Moreover, HUD and the federal government are the best-equipped entities to support housing for ELI households. Financing housing units and subsidies for ELI populations requires long-term, steady investments. Local governments that rely on fluctuating sales tax or temporary bond revenues are not as well-positioned to provide those types of investments as Congress and HUD are.

One of the ways the federal government could effectively invest in ELI households would be to increase funding for the National Housing Trust Fund (HTF), which provides funding for housing production and preservation and requires that at least 75% of funding be directed towards housing ELI households. We applaud the Committee Chairwoman's bill, H.R. 1856, which would increase investment in the HTF by \$1 billion annually and ensure there is a robust funding for these at-risk households. We also appreciate that H.R. 1856 balances the need to house those at-risk of homelessness through programs like the HTF with housing those that are already experiencing homelessness with investments in supportive housing and rental assistance.

There's more we can do to build off our successes. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) is an example of a unique success that should be replicated. Prior to the creation of the HUD-VASH program, there was little collaboration between local CoCs and local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) campuses along with few targeted resources to support homeless veterans to transition to housing. With the creation of HUD-VASH, increased housing resources were paired with case management, along with closer coordination between HUD, CoCs, and the VA. As a result, HUD-VASH has been a driver in reducing veteran homelessness. Nationally, veteran homelessness has fallen 42% between 2011 and 2018. Even in California, where overall homelessness has risen, veteran homelessness dropped by 35% over that period.^{xv}

Similar coordination and targeted resource efforts should be launched. Congress should seek new collaborations modeled after HUD-VASH between HUD and the Department of Labor (DOL) to pair housing programs like Rapid Re-Housing with workforce resources. HUD should also partner with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to connect people exiting the justice system with housing programs and seek to bring similar reductions in homelessness to our justice-involved populations.

These types of coordination can be enabled in part by our partners at the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The Council plays a vital role in sharing information on key programs and efforts across different agencies, while also lifting up best practices from across the country. USICH also shares vital data points on what types of interventions are working and how local communities can achieve the best possible results with the resources they have. Congress should support USICH and ensure they have the resources to enable meaningful collaboration not only between federal agencies, but between federal and local partners.

We have to continue to also lift up and support what the evidence tells us works best. For homelessness, this means reinforcing Housing First as a best practice. We know from a wide body of research that Housing First achieves the best results in terms of getting people housed and keeping them housed. Allowing jurisdictions to move away from Housing First would move us to a less effective system where we do not meet people where they are, and a system where we are less likely to see those people with the most acute needs actually get the opportunity to have those needs met in housing, be they mental health, substance use, or physical health needs.

We also must reject efforts that allow discrimination, whether that be based on race, sexual orientation or gender identity, immigration status, national origin, disability, or any other status. It is not enough to simply remove these barriers in language only, but we must actively and affirmatively remove those barriers. That means supporting legislation that would prohibit discrimination based on a person's source of income, which would also assist communities like ours to fully leverage our federal resources for Housing Choice Vouchers and other programs.

That also means rejecting efforts to limit access to public services. HUD's recent proposed rule on restricting access to public housing and vouchers for families with mixed-immigration status is an example of a rule change that we must reject. Changes such as these will have disproportionate impacts on Los Angeles and other communities in California that have large immigrant populations. Similarly, we must seek to rectify new rules, such as the Department of Homeland Security's new public charge rule, which is set to go into effect on October 15th, and would similarly limit the ability of

individuals to access public services without jeopardizing their prospects of becoming legal permanent residents.

We must also reject rules that allow for discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity—HUD’s Equal Access rule has been a key driver of ensuring that shelter programs are more inclusive places where our transgender neighbors are welcome. We know that this population is more likely to be homeless than the general population and therefore are deeply concerned by the possibility that the Equal Access rule might be weakened.

Our collective struggle against homelessness is not without its successes—we’ve seen here in Los Angeles that increased resources along with better coordination and concerted political can bring thousands of our neighbors into housing and into spaces where they can heal and recover from the traumas of the street. We cannot sustain these successes, however, without continued leadership and commitment from all levels of government. We look forward to continuing that vital work with the committee.

ⁱ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (2019). “2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count.”

ⁱⁱ California Housing Partnership Corporation. (2019). “2019 Los Angeles County Affordable Housing Outcomes Report.”

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). “FY 2019 Income Limits.”

^{iv} See note ii.

^v Jackson, K. (1985). “Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States.” Oxford University Press.

^{vi} 2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

^{vii} U.S. Census Bureau. *1940 Census*.

^{viii} Dagen Bloom, N. (2009). “Public Housing that Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century.” University of Pennsylvania Press.

^{ix} See note ii.

^x New York City Housing Authority. (2019). “Draft PHA Agency Plan: Annual Agency Plan for Fiscal Year 2020.”

^{xi} See note ii.

^{xii} *Ibid.*

^{xiii} 42 U.S.C. §5306.

^{xiv} 2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

^{xv} HUD. (2018). 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report.

SENATOR KEVIN MURRAY (ret)
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
HEARING ON
EXAMINING THE HOMELESS CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES
August 14, 2019

My name is Kevin Murray. I am the President and CEO of the Weingart Center, a homeless services agency located in Los Angeles' Skid Row. The Weingart Center is both a service provider and a developer of Permanent Supportive Housing.

I want to thank Chairwoman Waters and the Committee for holding this hearing on what I believe is the most crucial issue we face today. Providing a safety net to its citizens is one of the most important roles government plays.

I want to make 7 major points.

Resist the temptation to find and fund a silver bullet.

Solutions must be Multi-Modal. They must match up with the multitude of ways our neighbors got to homelessness. The current emphasis of HUD on the Housing First model to the exclusion of other solutions is counter productive. We need shelters, bridge housing and transitional housing in addition to Permanent Supportive Housing. Each has its place in the arsenal of solutions for this diverse population. The Housing First model has caused a reduction in funding for transitional housing which included Mental Health Services and Workforce Training. As a result the funding for in-house mental health services has gone away. Remote or periodic mental health services may not work for everyone.

Everyone is not housing ready, many need life skills or mental health treatment for the housing to be effective and to make them good neighbors

This concept should be extend to the practice of prioritizing those with high acuity scores. At first blush, prioritizing those with the most severe issues seems laudable, but on the ground, it leaves those who could be lifted up with a smaller boost to languish on the vine until they develop severe issues and become high acuity.

We Do Not Fund or Support Family Reunification

From school children to college students to adults, it is clear that the best indicator of success or with solving problems is a strong support structure. The best Social Worker is a supportive family member or friend. Many homeless have, of course, damaged their familial relationships, if they ever existed. We should fund attempts or reestablish familial bonds or created new ones. One of the corner stones of 12 step programs is the idea of a sponsor who is there to support one who has fallen without judgement.

Our Current Model Stifles Innovation

We currently operate on a strict model of placing homeless in apartments of a certain size with their own kitchen and bathroom. It may not be appropriate for a particularly client to live alone

in an apartment. There is very little funding for shared housing, roommates, or renting a room from a family member, all solutions that would likely result in better outcomes by creating a support structure to go along with the housing and supportive services.

We should aggressively enforce laws against those who prey on the homeless.

In each homeless area there are criminals or gangs who traffic in drugs or humans and who have the temerity to charge rent for a place on the sidewalk.

We need to find humane but more aggressive ways to deal with the Service Resistant.

There are many homeless who are resistant to the services being currently offered. Some are mentally ill or have substance abuse issues. Some do not want to abide by the rules of a housing placement. Some do not want to leave the community they have established on the street.

We expect someone with severe mental illness or substance abuse to make a rational decision to seek housing. This is irrational.

In the interest of protecting civil liberties, we are literally allowing those with the worst issues to die on the streets.

Previously unthinkable ideas like civil commitment need to be considered. This would, of course, require there to be sufficient beds in mental health facilities to receive these patients.

Los Angeles Taxpayers should be rewarded for voting to tax themselves to help solve the Homeless Crisis

Los Angeles taxpayers have voted to invest almost \$2,000,000,000 in homeless housing and services. The State of California has invested additional monies. The Federal Government should add to this leverage to build even more housing and provide more services.

Los Angeles needs more Section 8 vouchers

While Los Angeles has set an ambitious goal of building 10,000 units of Permanent Supportive Housing, we will run out of Section 8 vouchers to support those units well before reaching that number

In conclusion, I would like to again thank the Chairwoman and Committee for holding this hearing and would welcome any questions.

Alma Vizcaino Public Testimony

My name is Alma Vizcaino. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to my experiences.

I am here today to bring to light some of the statistics that you will hear about the impact on homelessness for women.

- What is troubling to me is that I was one of the over 216,000 women experiencing homelessness across the nation.
- This is a growing population of people experiencing homelessness.
- Nationwide, in the last year women experiencing homelessness grew by 3% and locally in Los Angeles there was a 13% increase.
- In Los Angeles, among both sheltered and unsheltered women approximately half experienced Domestic Violence.

Of course, please keep in mind this is a count of women that felt comfortable sharing that they had experienced domestic violence. Due to the stigma surrounding domestic violence we know that this is an under counted experience.

This was the case for me.

I did not acknowledge that I had experienced domestic violence until just two years ago when I was sitting in a mental health support group at the Downtown Women's Center, a local non-profit that supports women with housing and healthcare. I swept it under the rug for long time. There was never a good time to talk about it, so I did not talk about it.

Consequently, I have experienced periods of homelessness, mental health problems related to the impact of trauma, and chronic health conditions like diabetes as a result of my hardships.

I was born in Tijuana and raised here starting as a toddler in South Central. At an early age I started running away from a dysfunctional home of alcoholism and depression that impacted my ability to stay housed. My life was filled with struggle. The depression ended in having many unhealthy relationships. Domestic violence blanked me out mentally. Many women are ashamed and do not admit to the control and abuse they suffer, and some find it hard to get the help they needed.

When I first reached out for help at a shelter in the 1980's with my three children, it did not really work. All of the shelter staff were white; there were no Hispanics or Blacks there, and it was not a good fit for me and my family. We ended up leaving because I felt awkward.

I did ultimately find the help I needed through a Domestic Violence shelter called House of Ruth. After our stay there, my kids I left into housing subsidized through Section 8 for the next twenty years. I also became a board member with House of Ruth and found fulfillment in giving back in that way. For many years, we lived in the Los Feliz community. We felt safe, and my family thrived. My kids were doing well in school and I carried a few jobs. We were comfortable and we did not have to move around nor did we fear facing evictions.

Then my building was sold.

I could only afford housing for me and my kids in the South Central part of town. I was able to get my kids into private school through scholarships, but we could not escape the violence related to gang activity in my community. The burden of the community violence resulted in an eviction. My children went to live with friends and I became homeless again. For awhile, I sought comfort in a relationship, but that ended violently. When my boyfriend acted in a rage, I ended up in Skid Row. I stayed at the Union Rescue Mission. I then stayed with my brother in his car dealership building, but that was not a livable situation. I was then referred through the County to a women's program at the Weingart Center.

I now live in a Single Room Occupancy building in the Skid Row Community. I thought that permanent housing would solve all of my problems. Of course, it is better than living on the streets, but I still need more support to help me heal from the trauma of my life experiences.

The supports and services that have been most effective for helping me have been affordable housing, drug and alcohol services, support groups, and health outreach programs. I also am participating in a job training program, called LA:RISE where I am a support staff at the social enterprise at Downtown Women's Center. I look forward to graduating the program and seeking additional employment.

Congress could take many steps to end homelessness and prevent violence against women, including:

- Congress should ensure that the HUD budget is sufficient every year to meet the housing and services needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- One way to ensure adequate funding would be to pass the "Ending Homelessness Act of 2019".
- Additionally, congress should require HUD to call out women as a unique sub-population of people experiencing homelessness as they have done for Veterans.
- Congress should ensure that the Violence Against Women Act is reauthorized.
- Congress should ensure that programs allow for flexibility to serve women, including flexible funding for childcare, education, work programs, housing subsidies, and transportation.

Thank you for listening to my story. I hope that by sharing my story, I am able to end homelessness for my 216,000 sisters who do not have a home today.



Written Statement for the Record

Submitted By

Steve PonTell

**President & Chief Executive Officer
National Community Renaissance (National CORE)**

to the

**Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives**

Field Hearing on:

**EXAMINING THE HOMELESSNESS
CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES**

August 14, 2019

Los Angeles, CA

National Community Renaissance (National CORE) is pleased to submit this written statement for the record for today's hearing on the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles.

National CORE commends Chairwoman Waters for holding this hearing. We would also like to commend her and the Financial Services Committee for acting quickly on this issue – through Committee approval in March of H.R. 1856, the “Ending Homelessness Act of 2019.” This important legislation would authorize \$2.5 billion a year in total new funding each of the next five years for a combination of permanent supportive housing for the homeless, the Housing Trust Fund, and special purpose vouchers.

National CORE is also extremely appreciative of the inclusion in this bill of \$100 million for grants to provide outreach and to coordinate services for persons and households who are homeless or formerly homeless, and to provide supportive services to other targeted populations, such as seniors, the disabled, children, and teens. We also laud the inclusion of \$20 million in technical assistance to integrate and coordinate HUD McKinney-Vento homeless program funding with health care funded by federal programs, in collaboration with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Department of Health and Human Services.

National CORE can speak from experience in emphasizing the critical importance of supportive housing, including health services, in conjunction with affordable housing.

National CORE is one of the nation's largest and most effective non-profit affordable housing developers, with a 25-year track record in community revitalization. Headquartered in Southern California, with a strong presence in Florida, Texas, and Arkansas, National CORE produces quality affordable housing and provides a wide range of supportive services for residents. Nationwide, National CORE has 84 developments, with 8,475 units of affordable housing, serving approximately 28,000 residents. Projects include mixed-income and mixed-use models.

Our organization has been particularly innovative when it comes to partnerships that demonstrate the benefits and cost savings of linking affordable housing with supportive services onsite for residents. Our properties serve working families, seniors, the disabled, and individuals and families at-risk of homelessness. By providing affordable housing and onsite social services, National CORE is positioned to positively impact special needs populations, including the homeless and persons and families at-risk of homelessness. In addition to health and wellness, National CORE provides a range of family self-sufficiency services, including financial literacy, asset-building tools, and pathways to homeownership for its residents.

The Appendix to this statement lists all of our affordable rental housing developments in Los Angeles and Southern California that provide supportive housing. We would encourage members of the Committee to explore how residents' lives are enhanced through these activities, by visiting any of our developments.

The remainder of our testimony outlines why supportive services are important in combatting homelessness and why a focus on health care can both improve the wellness of residents and saving on health care costs on the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

The Importance of Supportive Services in Addressing Homelessness

National CORE has created an innovative model that combines safe, stable housing with supportive health and social services, which has led to positive outcomes for thousands of residents. This approach begins with quality, affordable housing, which serves as the foundation, and is augmented by supportive services tailored to the needs of the residents in that housing.

For more than 20 years, a cornerstone of HUD McKinney Vento homeless strategies and programs has been to support permanent supportive housing, through programs such as the Shelter Care Plus program. Providing site based, affordable housing for the homeless facilitates the provision of a wide range of services to help individuals address the underlying problems that can contribute to homelessness (such as mental health and alcohol and drug addiction problems) and to provide other services in the areas of employment and education to help facilitate self-sufficiency. The track record of this 20-year effort shows that this approach is extremely successful.

A good example of this is Marv's Place – A National CORE development that is the first permanent supportive housing development in the City of Pasadena for formerly homeless families, which provides a safe haven for families to begin rebuilding their lives. Union Station Homeless Services has an office onsite to provide case management, career development, money management classes, mental health services, substance abuse services and health care. Marv's Place also received first of its kind funding from First Five LA to set aside seven units for families with children under five.

The Linkage Between Affordable Housing and Health Care

National CORE has also established strategic partnerships with health care systems, insurance providers, and educational institutions – which recognize that housing is a determinant of health and are willing to invest dollars to better serve their community. By doing so, National CORE is able to help carry out innovative models for health care delivery.

For example, National CORE recently established a partnership with the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) to set aside 15 housing units in a new seniors community in Rancho Cucamonga, CA. IEHP is a nonprofit Medi-Cal and Medicare health plan headquartered in Rancho Cucamonga, that provides comprehensive managed health care coverage to more than 1.2 million residents in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

Separately, as part of the master-planned Arrowhead Grove Neighborhood Revitalization, in the City of San Bernardino, CA, National CORE has worked with community leaders and residents to pass a Specific Plan to establish a "complete community" which incorporated health as one of the five goals. Upon completion, the development will replace an aging 252-unit public housing complex – in desperate need for repair -- with a 38-acre, mixed-income community with approximately 400-units of affordable and market-rate housing.

Based on the success of the first two phases, Dignity Health, one of the largest health systems in the U.S., recently offered a \$1.2 million bridge loan to help move the next phases forward. The commitment followed \$20 million in funding from the California Strategic Growth Council through their Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program, demonstrating that with clear priorities and collaboration, developments such as Arrowhead Grove can attract new resources and deliver investments that are in alignment with community priorities and support community health.

These and many other National CORE developments show how health care dollars can close the gap in funding needed to build affordable housing, how affordable housing can improve health

outcomes, and how the integration of housing and services can reduce health care expenditures.

However, this approach is not replicable on a large scale without new sources of federal funding. It is time for federal policies to more fully recognize that quality housing is a key component of health and that more flexible use of federal health care dollars can both reduce homelessness and reduce health care expenditures.

Los Angeles County, California has carried out a program that demonstrates such savings. The Housing for Health program has housed and provided health care for more than 3,400 people since it launched in 2012. According to a recent study, public spending was reduced, which was attributed to understanding the connection between homelessness and health. For every dollar invested, the County saved \$1.20 in health care and other social services, according to the study. Participants' inpatient days dropped 76 percent and emergency room visits dropped 67 percent. Public service costs declined by nearly 60 percent, from an average of \$38,146, per person, per year, before housing, to \$15,358, after. Even after accounting for program costs, the county saved 20 percent.

In the case of Los Angeles County, this innovative approach to saving health care costs by providing housing and services to persons at-risk of homelessness only works financially because Los Angeles County is a closed system. Since the County reaps the direct benefit of health care savings arising investing in affordable housing, it is a good investment. Affordable housing owners and service providers do not realize these same savings, and therefore do not have the same financial incentives or access to funds to carry out this approach.

Federal agencies and states can better coordinate between low-income housing programs and federal health programs, including Medicaid. For example, while there is some flexibility in Medicaid in terms of using funding to pay for supportive services in coordination with low-income housing developments, and the use of funds for housing rental assistance, such options are currently underutilized in spite of the evidence that demonstrates the efficacy of such an approach.

It has long been established that alternatives to nursing homes can save Medicaid costs. The same can be true for Medicaid funds used for rental assistance and services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness – a class that has a pattern of more extensively using emergency and other high-cost health care services. A study by the American Hospital Association (AHA) provides evidence supporting such an approach. AHA found that when homeless individuals were provided with stable housing, their health choices improved, and overall healthcare costs declined. Specifically, they observed a 33 percent reduction in emergency room visits, a 42 percent reduction in days spent in nursing homes, and Medicaid expenditures declined by 12 percent.

Medicaid is beginning to approve waivers to allow states to take advantage of waivers to use Medicaid funds to carry out this strategy of reducing health care costs through investments in connection with affordable housing rental housing. A good example of this is California, which now allows for pilot/demonstration projects to provide wrap-around services and support for housing for homeless and very low-income individuals in order to control runaway health care costs of at-risk families and individuals (but does not allow funds to be used for affordable housing construction or rental assistance).

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for this critical hearing. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee, and members present at today's hearing as you explore what actions can be taken at the local, state, and federal level to effectively address homelessness.

**APPENDIX –
LIST OF NATIONAL CORE DEVELOPMENTS IN
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WITH SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**



A Non-Profit Housing Corporation

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

ALTA VISTA

60 Units
5051 E. 3rd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90022
(323) 263-0278 Office
(323) 263-3295 Fax
Community Manager: Claudia Jawegui
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

ENCANTO COURT

63 Units
1345 W. 105th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90044
(323) 734-0735 Office
(323) 734-2856 Fax
Community Manager: Alana Harper
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

MARY'S PLACE

20 Units
143 N. Mar Vista Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91106
(626) 714-7095 Office
(626) 714-7778 Fax
Community Manager: Maggie Sosa
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

PROMENADE

124 Units
1333 W. Garvey Avenue North
West Covina, CA 91790
(626) 856-0007 Office
(626) 856-3578 Fax
Community Manager: Julia Roldan
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

WHISPERING PALMS

75 Units
38250 9th Street East
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 267-0752 Office
(661) 267-0952 Fax
Community Manager: Toni Hewitt

Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

CLARK MANOR

41 Units
13032 Columbia Way
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 903-1044 Office
(562) 903-1050 Fax
Community Manager: Lisa Velazquez
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

HAWTHORNE TERRACE

100 Units
13006 Korriblum Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250
(310) 675-9007 Office
(310) 675-9750 Fax
Community Manager: Jackie Mendoza
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

OAKS ON FLORENCE

63 Units
4224 Florence Avenue
Bell, CA 90201
(323) 560-1222 Office
(323) 560-1674 Fax
Community Manager: Maggie Sosa
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

SUMMER TERRACE

80 Units
38530 Tierra Subida Avenue
Palmdale, CA 93551
(661) 538-0333 Office
(661) 267-6079 Fax
Community Manager: Angela Gonzales
Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

DOWNEY VIEW

50 Units
8314 2nd Street
Downey, CA 90241
(562) 381-1103 Office
(562) 381-1110 Fax
Community Manager: Maurice Patterson
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

LITTLE LAKE VILLAGE

144 Units
10902 Fulton Wells Avenue
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 903-1044 Office
(562) 903-1050 Fax
Community Manager: Lisa Velazquez
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

PARK VIEW TERRACE

72 Units
6728 Clara Street
Bell Gardens, CA 90201
(562) 928-0348 Office
(562) 928-7190 Fax
Community Manager: Elena Beltran
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

(Senior only community)

TRES LOMAS GARDEN

46 Units
4343 Toland Way
Los Angeles, CA 90041
(323) 255-4947 Office
(323) 255-2136 Fax
Community Manager: Douglas Vasquez
Regional Manager: John Sharkey

ORANGE COUNTY

ARBOR VILLAS

67 Units
4661 Plumosa Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
(714) 695-6655 Office
(714) 695-6629 Fax
Community Manager: Aly Gonzalez
Regional Manager: Monique Felix

LAS PALMAS

19 Units
115 Avenida Serra
San Clemente, CA 92672
(949) 388-7147 Office
(760) 967-7300 Fax
Community Manager: Kelly Madden
Regional Manager: Javany Martinez

OAKCREST HEIGHTS

90 Units
22733 Oakcrest Circle
Yorba Linda, CA 92887
Under Construction
Community Manager: Alma Minser
Regional Manager: Monique Felix

OAKCREST TERRACE

69 Units
22744 Eastpark Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 92887
(714) 637-4398 Office
(714) 637-4486 Fax
Community Manager: Alma Minser
Regional Manager: Monique Felix

(Senior only community)

VILLA PLUMOSA APARTMENTS

76 Units
4672 Plumosa Drive
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
(714) 695-6655 Office
(714) 695-6629 Fax
Community Manager: Aly Gonzalez
Regional Manager: Monique Felix

RIVERSIDE COUNTY

CATHEDRAL PALMS
 231 Units
 31-750 Landau Blvd.
 Cathedral City, CA 92234
 (760) 328-5213 Office
 (760) 328-0953 Fax
 Community Manager: Rob Hubler

Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

DESERT MEADOWS
 80 Units
 44071 Clinton Street
 Indio, CA 92201
 (760) 342-1144 Office
 (760) 775-4549 Fax
 Community Manager: Luz Carrillo
 Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

RIVER CANYON APARTMENTS
 60 Units
 34300 Corregidor Drive
 Cathedral City, CA 92234
 (760) 202-6130 Office
 (760) 202-6857 Fax
 Community Manager: Rosa Rovin
 Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

CORONA DE ORO
 72 Units
 680 W. Second Street
 Corona, CA 92882
 (951) 278-8277 Office
 (951) 278-8832 Fax
 Community Manager: Bertha Vasquez

Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

MISSION POINTE AT RIVERSIDE
 64 Units
 2750 Topaz Drive
 Riverside, CA 92507
 (951) 774-0816 Office
 (951) 774-0861 Fax
 Community Manager: Yvette Chagolla
 Regional Manager: Arlene Ortiz

VISTA DUNES COURTYARD HOMES
 80 Units
 44-950 Vista Dunes Lane
 La Quinta, CA 92253
 (760) 772-3444 Office
 (760) 772-3440 Fax
 Community Manager: Rosa Rovin
 Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

CORONA DEL REY
 160 Units
 1148 "D" Street
 Corona, CA 92882
 (951) 278-3245 Office
 (951) 278-4982 Fax
 Community Manager: Bertha Vasquez

Regional Manager: Nicole Kohli

(Senior only community)

MISSION VILLAGE SENIOR
 102 Units
 8989 Mission Blvd.
 Riverside, CA 92509
 (951) 685-2408 Office
 (951) 685-2494 Fax
 Community Manager: Tammy Griffin
 Regional Manager: Arlene Ortiz

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

CITRUS GROVE

152 Units
1432 N. Willow Avenue
Rialto, CA 92376
(909) 874-8391 Office
(909) 874-2169 Fax
Community Manager: **OPEN**
Regional Manager: *Marisela Gerez*

EAST RANCHO VERDE

40 Units
8837 Grove Avenue
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 981-8121 Office
(909) 949-9588 Fax
Community Manager: *Stephanie Hill*
Regional Manager: *Monique Felix*
(Senior only community)

HERITAGE POINTE

49 Units
8590 Malven Avenue
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 948-7579 Office
(909) 948-1622 Fax
Com. Manager: *Anna Ortiz*
Regional Manager: *Monique Felix*

MOUNTAINSIDE

384 Units
9181 E. Foothill Blvd.
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 989-9363 Office
(909) 941-3023 Fax
Com. Manager: *Anna Ortiz*
Regional Manager: *Monique Felix*
(Senior only community)

PLAZA AT SIERRA

90 Units
16999 Orange Way
Fontana, CA 92335
(909) 353-5643 Office
(909) 357-3391 Fax
Community Manager: *Tonya Graham*
Regional Manager: *Marisela Gerez*

SAN ANTONIO VISTA

75 Units
10410 Prodera Avenue
Montclair, CA 91763
(909) 626-3270 Office
(909) 626-3280 Fax
Intrm. Comm. Mgr.: *Randi Prewitt Asst. Mgr.*
Regional Manager: *Arlene Ortiz*

CROSSINGS

100 Units
177 W. South Street
Rialto, CA 92376
(909) 820-0665 Office
(909) 820-0635 Fax
Community Manager: *Dalia Garcia*
Regional Manager: *Marisela Gerez*
(Senior only community)

FOUNTAINS AT SIERRA

93 Units
16946 Ceres Avenue
Fontana, CA 92335
(909) 854-8783 Office
(909) 854-6224 Fax
Community Manager: *Barbara Lemus*
Regional Manager: *Marisela Gerez*

IMPRESSIONS AT VALLEY CENTER

100 Units
15500 Midtown Drive
Victorville, CA 92394
(760) 952-1798 Office
(760) 952-1898 Fax
Community Manager: *Frankie Rojas*
Regional Manager: *Nicole Kohli*

NORTHGATE VILLAGE

140 Units
17251 Dante Street
Victorville, CA 92394
(760) 245-6442 Office
(760) 243-1053 Fax
Community Manager: *Frankie Rojas*
Regional Manager: *Nicole Kohli*

RANCHO VERDE VILLAGE

248 Units
8837 Grove Avenue
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 981-8121 Office
(909) 949-9588 Fax
Community Manager: *Stephanie Hill*
Regional Manager: *Monique Felix*

SAN EMI APARTMENTS

18 Units
4115 Kingsley Street
Montclair, CA 91763
(909) 267-1583 Office
(909) 267-1590 Fax
Intrm. Comm. Mgr.: *Alicia Myers Asst. Mgr.*
Regional Manager: *Arlene Ortiz*

DUMOSA SENIOR VILLAGE

75 Units
57110 Twentynine Palms Hwy.
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
(760) 853-7021 Office
(760) 853-7025 Fax
Community Manager: *Nora Brady*
Regional Manager: *Nicole Kohli*
(Senior only community)

GARDENS AT SIERRA

93 Units
16838 Ceres Avenue
Fontana, CA 92335
(909) 854-7400 Office
(909) 854-4850 Fax
Community Manager: *Barbara Lemus*
Regional Manager: *Marisela Gerez*

MONTEREY VILLAGE

224 Units
10244 Arrow Route
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 980-7235 Office
(909) 980-8965 Fax
Com. Manager: *Dana McDaniel*
Regional Manager: *Monique Felix*

OLIVE MEADOW

62 Units
610 E. Olive Street
San Bernardino, CA 92410
(909) 763-3240 Office
(909) 763-3242 Fax
Community Mgr.: *Jackie Berckley*
Regional Manager: *Arlene Ortiz*

RENAISSANCE VILLAGE

144 Units
220 N. Glenwood Avenue
Rialto, CA 92376
(909) 877-1177 Office
(909) 877-0894 Fax
Community Manager: *Emma Rodriguez*
Regional Manager: *Marisela Gerez*
(Senior only community)

SAN MARINO APARTMENTS

85 Units
10355 S. Mills Avenue
Montclair, CA 91763
(909) 399-9540 Office
(909) 399-9517 Fax
Intrm. Comm. Mgr.: *Alicia Myers Asst. Mgr.*
Regional Manager: *Arlene Ortiz*

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

SUNSET HEIGHTS

117 Units
6230 Haven Avenue
Alta Loma, CA 91737
(909) 980-3106 Office
(909) 944-5524 Fax

Community Manager: Michelle Ramirez
Regional Manager: Arlene Ortiz

(Senior only community)

VILLAGE AT SIERRA

108 Units
8684 Sierra Avenue
Fontana, CA 92335
(909) 350-2188 Office
(909) 350-2199 Fax

Community Manager: Tonya Graham
Regional Manager: Marisela Gerez

VISTA DEL CIELO

50 Units
10319 S. Mills Avenue
Montclair, CA 91763
(909) 621-2584 Office
(909) 621-2596 Fax

Intrm. Comm. Mgr.: Jennifer Heynez Asst. Mgr.
Regional Manager: Arlene Ortiz

SYCAMORE SPRINGS

240 Units
7127 Archibald Avenue
Alta Loma, CA 91701
(909) 989-7866 Office
(909) 989-6459 Fax

Community Manager: Stephanie Chase
Regional Manager: Monique Felix

VILLAGGIO ON ROUTE 66

166 Units
10220 Foothill Blvd.
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 466-6250 Office
(909) 466-6261 Fax

Community Manager: Crystal Lawless
Regional Manager: Monique Felix

VALENCIA VISTA

76 Units
950 N. Valencia Avenue
San Bernardino, CA 92410
(909) 381-0076 Office
(909) 380-0299 Fax

Community Mgr.: Jackie Berckley
Regional Manager: Arlene Ortiz

VISTA CASCADE

42 Units
1432 N. Willow Avenue
Rialto, CA 92376
(909) 874-8391 Office
(909) 874-2169 Fax

Community Manager: OPEN
Regional Manager: Marisela Gerez

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

<p>(Senior only community)</p> <p>CAPE COD SENIOR VILLAS 36 Units 1710 Maxson Street, #221 Oceanside, CA 92054 (760) 967-7500 Office (760) 967-7300 Fax Community Manager: Kelly Madden Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <hr/> <p>LA MISION VILLAGE 80 Units 3220 Mission Avenue, Suite 7 Oceanside, CA 92054 (760) 967-7500 Office (760) 967-7300 Fax Community Manager: Kelly Madden Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <hr/> <p>PARKSIDE 40 Units 4035 Park Haven Court, #D San Diego, CA 92113 (619) 264-5692 Office (619) 264-1725 Fax Community Manager: Tony Cisneros Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <hr/> <p>SIERRA VISTA 192 Units 422 Los Vallecitos Blvd. San Marcos, CA 92069 (760) 471-1776 Office (760) 471-7261 Fax Community Manager: Danielle Mixon Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>VILLA SERENA 136 Units 339-340 Marcos Street San Marcos, CA 92069 (760) 744-2450 Office (760) 744-2408 Fax Community Manager: OPEN Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>VISTA TERRAZA I & II 123 Units 7735 Via Solare San Diego, CA 92129 (858) 484-3027 Office (858) 484-1061 Fax Community Manager: Juan Lopez Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p>	<p>COBBLESTONE VILLAGE 44 Units 360 E. Washington Avenue Escondido, CA 92023 (760) 741-9075 Office (760) 743-3736 Fax Community Manager: Maricela Gonzalez Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>MELROSE VILLAS 113 Units 1820 Melrose Drive San Marcos, CA 92078 (760) 798-7500 Office (760) 798-7502 Fax Community Manager: Anastasia Davis Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>PASEO DEL ORO 120 Units 432 W. Mission Road, Suite 106 San Marcos, CA 92069 (760) 471-4867 Office (760) 471-5281 Fax Community Manager: Stacey Jamikowski Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>SPRING VALLEY 60 Units 8885 Orville Street Spring Valley, CA 91977 (619) 741-1032 Office (619) 741-1532 Fax Community Manager: Maria Pampa Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <hr/> <p>VISTA DEL PUENTE 52 Units 1436 S. 40th Street San Diego, CA 92213 (619) 264-0346 (619) 264-0336 Community Manager: Jennifer Freeman Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <hr/> <p>WEST LAKE VILLAGE 89 Units 415 Autumn Drive San Marcos, CA 92069 (760) 571-6958 Office (760) 571-6957 Fax Community Manager: Jennifer Estrada Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p>	<p>(Senior only community)</p> <p>JUNIPER SENIOR VILLAGE 61 Units 215 E. Washington Avenue Escondido, CA 92025 (760) 294-1474 Office (760) 294-1301 Fax Community Manager: Maricela Gonzalez Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>MISSION COVE I & II 90 Units 3247 Anchor Way Oceanside, CA 92054 (760) 453-7812 Office (760) 453-7822 Fax Community Manager: Ida Lebron Regional Manager: Ruben Minjarez</p> <hr/> <p>SHADOW HILL 82 Units 11085 Woodside Avenue Santee, CA 92071 (619) 449-9091 Office (619) 449-4344 Fax Community Manager: Martha Lopez Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <p>(Senior only community)</p> <p>TALMADGE SENIOR VILLAGE 91 Units 5252 El Cajon Blvd. San Diego, CA 92115 (619) 265-1600 Office (619) 265-0668 Fax Community Manager: Irena Dervishi Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p> <hr/> <p>VISTA DEL SOL 132 Units 1545 "Q" Avenue National City, CA 91950 (619) 477-6708 Office (619) 477-6214 Fax Community Manager: Tony Cisneros Regional Manager: Javany Martinez</p>
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August 14, 2019

To the United States House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services:

I am a community organizer in the Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles and would like to submit my comments for today's FSC hearing on LA homelessness. I'm with the organizations Ktown for All, Services Not Sweeps, and Street Watch LA.

I appreciate the FSC's focus on the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles and hope that some time will be spent on the human rights violations carried out by the City of LA against the unsheltered population. Last year, 918 homeless people died in LA County, their lives endangered by the deprivation of services and the brutality of Mayor Garcetti's criminalization policies. One of those deaths was our friend in Koreatown named Joe. He was evicted from his apartment of 11 years in our gentrifying neighborhood so that the landlord can raise the rent. Within a few months of camping on the streets, Joe faced multiple sweeps where he lost all of his belongings, including his heart medication. He died shortly after these sweeps. Across LA, these stories are playing out everyday. Just yesterday, a brutal sweep in the nearby neighborhood of Echo Park threw away tents, medication, ID's, and other essential belongings. Street Watch LA has a more detailed account of the sweep on their Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/StreetWatchLA/status/1161459995377930240?s=19>

As part of the #ServicesNotSweeps coalition, we have asked Mayor Garcetti to provide basic public health resources, such as bathrooms, handwashing stations, regular garbage pickup, and garbage receptacles, instead of dehumanizing sweeps. Mayor Garcetti's response has been to increase the brutality and frequency of sweeps and to mock activists in public statements with the disingenuous argument that our efforts somehow hinder housing. On the contrary, we believe that only housing will end homelessness and until people are housed, they must be treated with respect and provided with services that will help them escape homelessness. At the very least, homeless Angelenos should be afforded the bare minimum standard of treatment as U.N. refugee camps.

Sincerely,

Jane Nguyen
Ktown for All
ktownforall.org

← Thread



Street Watch LA @StreetWatchLA · 13h

Today we witnessed the worst sweep in two years of monitoring the encampment under the 101 overpass in Echo Park — just two days before the neighborhood begins to welcome visitors for the #EchoParkRising festival. #EchoParkRisingRent #ServicesNotSweeps



DSA-LA 📍 and 4 others

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Street Watch LA @StreetWatchLA · 13h

Residents were given 10 MINUTES to pack up their things, just two days after another massive sweep. The sidewalk was clear of trash and ADA compliant — no reason to sweep but to terrorize and displace people. #ServicesNotSweeps #EchoParkRisingRent



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Street Watch LA @StreetWatchLA · 13h

The only impetus Councilmember @MitchOFarrell needs for a sweep like this is LA Municipal Code 56.11, an ordinance used to criminalize and destroy unhoused peoples belongings.

The City is getting sued over that law, btw. #ServicesNotSweeps

lafla.org/news/press-rel...

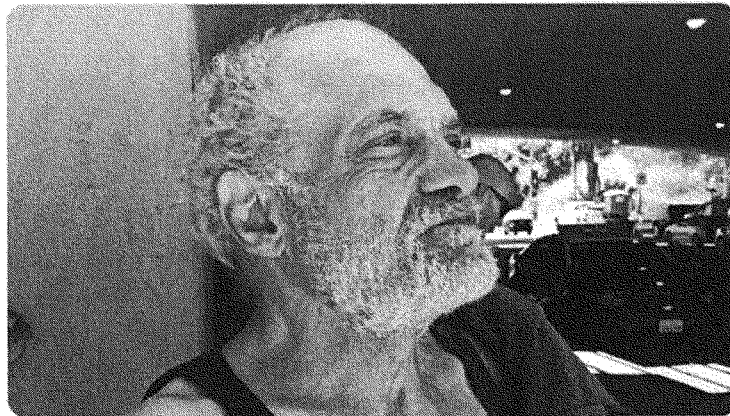
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Street Watch LA @StreetWatchLA · 13h

Replying to @StreetWatchLA @DSA_LosAngeles and 5 others

The city destroyed Edward's cell phone, green card, social security card, tent, and bedding. On this hot summer's day, they poured out residents' water jugs, too. #ServicesNotSweeps #EchoParkRisingRent



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Street Watch LA @StreetWatchLA · 13h

One resident wasn't present for the sweep because he was already dealing with a 56.11 ticket in court. Now, his tent is destroyed. #ServicesNotSweeps #EchoParkRisingRent

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Street Watch LA @StreetWatchLA · 13h

If it all sounds deeply inhumane, it's because it is. Officer Chong on the scene said, "Your definition of a cleanup is getting rid of trash. Our definition is getting rid of tents." #ServicesNotSweeps #EchoParkRisingRent

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