



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 622

Resolution calling upon Congress to pass and the President to sign legislation that shall prohibit the diversion of resources from dedicated funds that support U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing funding, which assists veterans experiencing homelessness with obtaining permanent housing.

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams)

Whereas, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (“HUD-VASH”) Program offers U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) housing vouchers to veterans experiencing homelessness, along with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) supportive services to assist them and their families in finding and sustaining permanent housing; and

Whereas, On December 1, 2017, then-VA Secretary David Shulkin announced a decision to redirect HUD-VASH funding to local VA hospitals, effectively ending the program; and

Whereas, HUD-VASH has significantly decreased the number of veterans experiencing homelessness since 2010, issuing over 87,000 housing vouchers nationwide as of April 2017 and reducing veterans homelessness by nearly 47 percent—from 74,087 in 2010 to 39,471 in 2016, according to HUD; and

Whereas, Approximately 45 percent of homeless veterans experience mental illness and 70 percent experience substance use disorder, with many experiencing both, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (“SAMHSA”), and as such would leave HUD-VASH recipients susceptible to losing their housing without the health, mental health, and substance use support services provided by the program; and

Whereas, In December 2015, New York City became the largest city in the country to be certified for ending chronic veteran homelessness by the federal government and announced its rapid approach towards

“functional zero”-where all new homeless veterans are housed within 90 days of entering the homeless system- largely due to the HUD-VASH program; and

Whereas, As of December 2017, the number of veterans staying in New York City shelters or experiencing street homelessness since 2011 has been reduced by approximately 90 percent, according to HUD, and an end to the HUD-VASH program could reverse such a trend; and

Whereas, HUD-VASH funding was not redirected and was preserved in this past budget after public pushback; and

Whereas, However, veterans advocates are concerned that considerations to end the HUD-VASH program could return in 2019; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Congress to pass and the President to sign legislation that shall prohibit the diversion of resources from dedicated funds that support U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing funding, which assists veterans experiencing homelessness with obtaining permanent housing.

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