



Legislation Text

File #: Res 2002-2009, **Version:** A

Res. No. 2002-A

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass S. 5605-A/A.8353-D, which would amend the social services law, in relation to financial contributions by recipients of temporary housing assistance.

By The Speaker (Council Member Quinn), Council Member de Blasio, the Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum), Council Members Jackson, James, Mark-Viverito, Mealy, Palma, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Weprin, Lappin, Brewer, White Jr., Ferreras, Dickens and Garodnick

Whereas, According to the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), at the end of May, 2009, there were 9,323 homeless families living in DHS emergency housing; and

Whereas, According to DHS, as of May 31, 2009, on average homeless families spent over 276 days (over 9 months) in shelter prior to finding permanent housing; and

Whereas, According to the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, the number of families with children entering shelter rose by 38 percent in the first four months of FY 2009 compared to the first four months of FY 2008, which "mirrors national trends caused by job loss, foreclosure and other economic conditions;" and

Whereas, According to 2007 data from United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, over 80 percent of New York State's homeless families with children are in shelter in New York City; and

Whereas, The costs of housing in New York City are substantially higher than in the rest of New York State; and

Whereas, Pursuant to a 1997 provision of the New York State Social Services Law, homeless families are required to contribute to the costs of shelter; and

Whereas, The New York State Bureau of Audit and Quality Control (A&QC) performed an audit of homeless families in the shelter system with income in 2005 to determine whether income was appropriately

budgeted; and

Whereas, The A&QC issued a final report on February 15, 2007, which found that the New York City Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration (HRA) and DHS had not offset the cost of homeless shelter payments with client income, as required by the State; and

Whereas, The State recouped over \$2.4 million from HRA and DHS as a result of the audit; and

Whereas, As a result of the audit, on May 1, 2009, DHS began instituting a policy that requires homeless families in shelter with earned income to contribute to the cost of shelter; and

Whereas, Under the new policy, it has been reported that affected families will be required to pay up to fifty percent of their income to the shelter; and

Whereas, Under the new policy, if families do not make the required payments, they face ejection from shelter; and

Whereas, The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) suspended implementation of the policy temporarily on May 21, 2009, because the amount that some families were told to pay was miscalculated; and

Whereas, In order to exit shelter expeditiously and successfully, homeless families need to keep as much income in their pockets as possible, so that they can apply it to the costs of permanent housing; and

Whereas, The new policy will likely result in homeless families staying longer in shelter, because they will not be able to afford permanent housing; and

Whereas, If those families who do not pay are required to leave shelter, homeless families, including children, may be left with nowhere to go; and

Whereas, The policy has already been suspended based on poor implementation, which has caused unwarranted confusion to homeless families in shelter; and

Whereas, S.5605-A/A.8353-D would help homeless families leave the shelter system and find permanent, stable housing by amending the Social Services Law to stop the practice of charging rent to

homeless families in shelter who have income; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass S.5605-A/A.8353-D, which would amend the Social Services Law, in relation to financial contributions by recipients of temporary housing assistance.

MRM
LS 7514
6/26/09