



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

September 16, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We all agree that homelessness is a national crisis decades in the making that demands action at every level of government – local, state, and federal. In California, state and local governments have ramped up action to lift families out of poverty by investing in behavioral health, affordable housing, and other homeless programs. In contrast, your Administration proposed significant cuts to public housing and programs like the Community Development Block Grant.

Yet in recent days, you have publicly acknowledged the national crisis of homelessness. On behalf of a broad, bipartisan coalition of California's elected mayors, councilmembers and members of county Board of Supervisors, we invite you to collaborate with us on solutions — tied to federal investments — to address homelessness and housing insecurity.

California requests you immediately act to address the need for more housing options for the homeless. Specifically, California requests that your Administration immediately:

- (1) Provide 50,000 more vouchers, through a combination of Housing Choice Vouchers and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers, two longstanding key programs that provide needed rental subsidies for extremely low-income Americans;
- (2) Increase the value of those vouchers to account for the high cost of rents in America's cities and counties; and,
- (3) Create a program based on best practices to incentivize landlords to work with voucher holders to find stable housing.

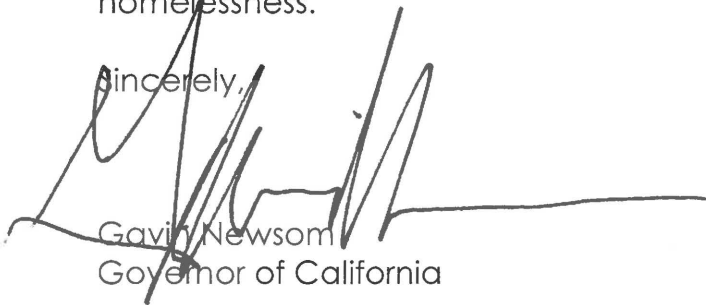
Mr. President – shelter solves sleep, but only housing solves homelessness. With 50,000 additional vouchers, California could address a significant proportion of our unsheltered population, including thousands of Veterans, with a time-tested strategy to prevent or end homelessness: stable housing.

Pairing more vouchers with an increase in the fair market rent value of the vouchers, you have the ability to make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many who suffer on our streets. These federal programs have a track record of success when implemented properly, and we urge you to consider this request in good faith.

Moving forward, these improvements must be made sustainable and predictable through larger Congressional appropriations. Local governments need year-over-year certainty about the Federal government's commitment to homeless housing. Hence, we request that you work with Congress to increase funding for both the Housing Choice and VASH programs through, among other bills, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 (H.R. 1856), introduced by House Financial Services Chair Maxine Waters. This bill would provide for 300,000 new housing vouchers nationwide and give preference to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

We stand ready to work in partnership with you to address this crisis with serious solutions that will actually help Veterans and other at-risk Americans exit homelessness.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom
Governor of California

Virginia Bass

Supervisor Virginia Bass, Humboldt County
President, California State Association of Counties
On behalf of California's 58 counties



Mayor Darrell Steinberg, Sacramento
On behalf of California's Big City Mayors



Councilmember Janet Arbuckle, City of Grass Valley
President, California League of Cities
On behalf of California's cities