

Communication from Public

Name: Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing
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Council File No: 20-0102
Comments for Public Posting: The Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing, representing dozens of affordable housing developers in the City of Los Angeles, strongly supports the motion to begin exploring the "Right to Housing" city wide. We have drafted an attached letter in support of the motion.

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March 17, 2021

Los Angeles City Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas
200 N. Spring Street, Suite 420
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: SCANPH Support for Motion to Create “A Right to Housing” in Los Angeles

Dear Councilmember Ridley-Thomas:

The Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing (SCANPH), representing dozens of affordable housing developers throughout the City of Los Angeles, wishes to comment on a motion filed by your office on December 15th, 2020 to direct various City departments to begin research on the establishment of “A Right to Housing” in Los Angeles. **SCANPH unequivocally believes that housing is a human right, and commends your office for taking steps to make this a reality in Los Angeles.**

Despite the work of various City and County authorities in recent years, there is no doubt that the situation for our unhoused neighbors in Los Angeles has become dire, if not shameful. In 2020, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority tallied 66,436 people experiencing homelessness county-wide during its annual point-in-time count. Despite this figure being a 12% increase from the previous year, there is consensus that this number total could be much higher in reality, as many slip into and out of homelessness at other points throughout the year. With some 550,000 households in Los Angeles County classified as severely rent burdened, the end seems nowhere in sight.

The pervasive nature of homelessness in Los Angeles only highlights how systemic this problem is, and how deep its roots run. For decades, racially exclusive housing policies, an overly punitive criminal justice system, and the criminalization of mental health issues and addiction created a precarious situation for our most marginalized neighbors, often along racial lines. Despite being only 8% of the county’s population, Black people represent 33% of the county’s unhoused. A worsening housing crisis, lacking tenant protections, and waves of gentrification and displacement have only exacerbated these underlying problems to the point where they can no longer be ignored: **it is now estimated that nearly 4 unhoused people die on the streets of this county every day.**

As your motion argues, countries around the world agreed that housing was a fundamental right in 1948 through the United Nations. The current situation in Los Angeles reflects why that is case: without housing, people quickly fall into poor mental and physical health, often dying prematurely. When this basic need goes unmet, one simply cannot lead a healthy life.

Proposition HHH funding as well as other efforts from County and City officials made 2020 a record year for housing individuals experiencing homelessness. But the number of people falling into homelessness yearly remains too great for our current systems to overcome. This motion is a step to build accountability into our systems, correct historical wrongdoings, and do right by our most excluded neighbors, 80% of whom have lived here for more than five years. SCANPH praises your office for exploring how the City of Los Angeles can go beyond our current efforts and begin guaranteeing something so fundamental to human safety and wellbeing. We also applaud the Council for approving your motion on March 3rd to begin taking earnest steps toward making this a reality.

Thank you for prioritizing an issue important to our organization's membership so early during your time in office. We look forward to the reports brought back to council by the Housing and Community Investment Department, and hope that this motion will eventually bring material change to the lives of our unhoused neighbors and greater Los Angeles.

Sincerely,



Alan Greenlee

Executive Director

Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing (SCANPH)

Cc:

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