

MOTION HOUSING

The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought extraordinary urgency at both the local and state levels to protect and house our most vulnerable community members who are at an elevated risk of being hospitalized or dying if they contract the coronavirus. In response to this crisis within a crisis, the City and the County of Los Angeles, in coordination with public and private partners, have mobilized in unprecedented ways to bring its most vulnerable homeless neighbors indoors.

In spite of these efforts, and in the face of a pandemic that continues unabated, more people are dying on the streets every day. The most recent data from the County of Los Angeles' Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner shows that from January 1, 2020 to December 1, 2020, there were 1,248 known fatalities among people experiencing homelessness, a 32 percent increase from the previous year. While the deleterious effects of living on the streets include premature aging and untimely death, research shows that housing is a health intervention which creates a foundation for recovery and reintegration.

Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right to housing as part of the broader right to an adequate standard of living. If housing is to be acknowledged as a human right, it is paramount that all public jurisdictions take progressive steps to adopt legislative, administrative, judicial and budgetary measures to advance the Right to Housing for all. A Right to Housing framework would seek to redress structural disparities that disproportionately affect Black people and other historically-oppressed peoples.

Earlier this year, the Governor's Council of Regional Homeless Advisors released a 40-point Comprehensive Crisis Response, an agenda for a bold and strategic response at the local, State, and federal levels to address homelessness. In addition to recommendations that will help keep people housed with rental assistance and services, and breaking the vicious cycle between jails, hospitals and homelessness, the Comprehensive Crisis Response put forward the idea of an enforceable obligation for government to provide a right to housing within the shortest feasible timeframe. Implicit in the Council's recommendations is a unifying call for State, County and City governments to respond to this crisis with renewed urgency, boldness and ingenuity.

Both the Los Angeles City Council and Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors have directed staff to initiate efforts to develop a road map for the local implementation of the Comprehensive Crisis Response strategy. While efforts over the past few months have focused on pandemic-related disaster response efforts, including housing the most vulnerable on the streets through Project Roomkey and Homekey, the meaningful reallocation of resources, policies and programs to prevent the anticipated onslaught of evictions and mount a robust response to help those still languishing on the streets must be ramped up now - or Los Angeles is likely to become home to thousands more needless deaths.

Homelessness continues to be the moral crisis of our time, which will define our civic legacy in the eyes of future generations. If there is a true commitment to addressing this crisis, we must align our systems with our values and ensure that all those who call the City of Los Angeles home, truly have a place to call home.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Administrative Officer, with the assistance of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and the Chief Legislative Analyst be directed to give a verbal status report to the Homelessness and Poverty Committee on recommended local initiatives that align with the Governor's Council of Regional Homeless Advisors' "Comprehensive Crisis Response Strategy," as directed by the Council on February 19, 2020 (CF 20-0102).

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct Housing and Community Investment Department, with the assistance of the City Administrative Officer, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Attorney, to report back in 60 days on what resources are necessary for the goal of establishing a Right to Housing framework within the City of Los Angeles. The report should include the following:

- 1) A legal framework and proposed implementation strategy, which includes targets, funding and a timeline, to pilot an effort to achieve a Right to Housing; and
- 2) An assessment of available funding to implement the aforementioned Right to Housing and the Comprehensive Crisis Response Strategy, in the broader context of the City's current efforts to end homelessness, and the extent to which these resources would need to be further scaled up, in partnership with the County, State and Federal Government.

PRESENTED BY: _____

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS (verbal)
Councilmember, 10th District

MITCH O'FARRELL (verbal)
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NURY MARTINEZ (verbal)
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