

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: August 11, 2023

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 23-0002-S75
Assignment No.: 23-08-0419

SUBJECT: Resolution (Harris-Dawson, Hutt – Hernandez) to Support for H.R. 4232, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2023.

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Harris-Dawson, Hutt – Hernandez) to include in the City's 2023-2024 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H.R. 4232, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2023, which would end homelessness and significantly reduce American poverty through the entitlement of the Housing Choice Voucher program.

SUMMARY

Resolution (Harris-Dawson, Hutt – Hernandez) was introduced on August 1, 2023 and states that California is home to an estimated 172,000 people experiencing homelessness, constituting 30 percent of the nation's total unhoused population. The Resolution states that the homeless population in the City increased by 10 percent in the 2022 Point-In-Time Count to a total of 46,260 people.

The Resolution states that the housing choice voucher program should be expanded to increase the appropriations for additional vouchers. The Resolution states that Congresswoman Maxine Waters introduced H.R. 4232, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2023, which would transform the Housing Choice Voucher program into a federal entitlement.

The Resolution recommends that the City support the legislation because it would contribute toward ending homelessness in the City and significantly reduce poverty.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness has been increasing in the City as well as the State and the country. Unsheltered homelessness in particular has been increasing nationwide. While there have been relief efforts from the federal government, there is a need for additional resources to address this growing issue. The United States does not have a federal entitlement program for housing. The food stamps program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is a federal entitlement program that guarantees payments to households for the purchase of food. SNAP is the largest federal nutrition assistance program that provides benefits to eligible low-income individuals and families. Housing programs require households to enroll for and hope to receive assistance. Currently, four out of five households who qualify for a Housing Choice Voucher do not receive it.

The Ending Homelessness Act of 2023, H.R. 4232, was introduced by Maxine Waters and has been referred to the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services. The bill seeks to end homelessness

and reduce poverty in the United States by expanding the Housing Choice Voucher. The bill transforms the program into a federal entitlement which would lead to every qualifying household automatically receiving rental support. Housing vouchers are currently provided through a limited first-come-first-served process to access a limited number of vouchers. The bill would be phased in over eight years. The bill has appropriations for fiscal years 2024 to 2027 with amounts to incrementally fund vouchers, renew vouchers annually, and for administrative fees. The bill would appropriate \$10 billion over five years to establish the creation of permanent affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. The bill also proposes funding to provide outreach and case management to support the program as well as technical assistance to states and municipalities to better align their healthcare and housing strategies. The bill also has language to ban housing discrimination based on source of income and veteran status. The bill also permanently authorizes the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which coordinates federal homelessness strategy.

Households who are eligible to receive rental assistance include households with income at or below half of the extremely low-income threshold or have income below the extremely low-income threshold and include a member who receives Supplement Security Income.


The City should support H.R. 4232, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2023, because it would increase the number of housing choice vouchers by 500,000 vouchers in fiscal year 2024, and 1,000,000 vouchers each calendar year from 2025 to 2027. It would provide housing access to people who need it the most. It would also significantly reduce poverty in the City and nationwide by stabilizing housing for households who do not otherwise have access to affordable housing. Furthermore, it would automatically enroll households and reduce bureaucratic red tape and prevent public housing agencies from screening out applicant. It would also prevent landlords from discriminating against renters based on their source of income and veteran status. Researchers at Columbia University have stated that the bill could lift nine million people out of poverty, reduce child poverty, and reduce racial disparities in poverty rates.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

BILL STATUS

6/21/2023 Introduced in House


Pranita Amatya
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed to, or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, California is home to an estimated 172,000 homeless people, constituting 30% of the nation's total unhoused population; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority showed a 10 percent increase in homelessness in the City from 2022, bringing the total Point-in-Time Count estimate to 46,260 people; and

WHEREAS, Congresswoman Maxine Waters introduced H.R. 4232, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2023, which would aim to end homelessness and significantly reduce American poverty by transforming the Housing Choice Voucher program into a federal entitlement, thus guaranteeing access to assistance for every qualifying household; and

WHEREAS, expanding the housing choice voucher program would create appropriations through 2027 for funding 500,000 vouchers in fiscal year 2024 and 1,000,000 vouchers each calendar year from 2025 through 2027; and

WHEREAS, the legislation would ensure that beginning in fiscal year 2028, families meeting certain income thresholds would be entitled to a Housing Choice Voucher and prevent public housing agencies from screening out voucher applicants or terminating assistance based on a person's criminal or drug use history; and

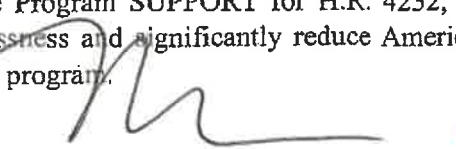
WHEREAS, the legislation would also prohibit landlords from discriminating against renters based on source of income and veteran status, thereby helping create more equal access to housing;

WHEREAS, the Ending Homelessness Act would also provide funding for outreach and case management to better connect persons experiencing homelessness with needed services and assistance, helping states and local jurisdictions better align their healthcare and housing strategies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2023-2024 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H.R. 4232, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2023, which would end homelessness and significantly reduce American poverty through the entitlement of the Housing Choice Voucher program.

PRESENTED BY


HEATHER HUTT
Councilmember, 10th District


MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th District



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