

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 119

Expressing the sense of the Congress that involuntary homelessness for families, women, and children in America should be eliminated.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2012

Mr. CONYERS (for himself and Ms. LEE of California) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that involuntary homelessness for families, women, and children in America should be eliminated.

Whereas according to the nonprofit organization Doorways for Women and Families, there are approximately 600,000 families experiencing homelessness in the United States each year, which constitutes approximately 50 percent of the homeless population during the year;

Whereas homeless families constitute approximately 50 percent of the homeless population during each year;

Whereas the National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that in the next 3 years, homelessness in the United States could increase by 5 percent, or 74,000 individuals;

Whereas the number of families experiencing homelessness increased by an average of 15 percent;

Whereas homeless families are under considerable stress, move frequently, and many are living in difficult living situations, such as overcrowded shelters or the apartments of relatives and friends;

Whereas according to The National Center on Family Homelessness, 84 percent of families experiencing homelessness are headed by females;

Whereas according to The National Center on Family Homelessness, 29 percent of adults in homeless families are working;

Whereas according to The National Center on Family Homelessness, over 92 percent of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse during their lifetimes;

Whereas 50 percent of homeless mothers have experienced a major depressive episode;

Whereas according to a report issued in 2010 by The National Center on Family Homelessness, there are more than 1,600,000 homeless children in the United States;

Whereas the number of homeless children has increased by 38 percent during the current economic recession;

Whereas according to The National Center on Family Homelessness, one-fifth of homeless children are separated from their immediate family at some point;

Whereas according to a 2006 report by the United States Conference of Mayors, 55 percent of the cities surveyed reported that homeless families may have to break up in order to be sheltered;

Whereas at least 30 percent of children in foster care could return to their home if their parents had housing;

Whereas according to Doorways For Women and Families, homeless children between the ages of 6 and 17 years of age struggle with high rates of mental health problems, and 47 percent have problems with anxiety, depression, or withdrawal compared to 18 percent of other school age children;

Whereas according to Doorways For Women and Families, homeless children get sick twice as often as other children, have twice as many ear infections, 4 times more asthma attacks, 5 times more stomach problems, 6 times more speech problems, twice as many hospitalizations, and go hungry twice as often as other children;

Whereas according to Doorways For Women and Families, homeless children are four times more likely to have developmental delays, twice as likely to have learning disabilities, and twice as likely to repeat a grade;

Whereas according to the National Coalition for the Homeless, the rise in homelessness over the past 25 years is due to a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty and unemployment;

Whereas according to the National Coalition for the Homeless, the rise in home foreclosures has increased the number of people experiencing homelessness;

Whereas according to the National Coalition for the Homeless, a lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs have contributed to the current housing crisis and homelessness;

Whereas according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, most cities across the country have long waiting lists for public housing and apartments subsidized under the section 8 rental assistance program due to insufficient Federal funding;

Whereas according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there are approximately 10,000,000 extremely low-income renter households in the United States and only 6,500,000 affordable housing units;

Whereas the United States has more than enough resources to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for all families, women, and children;

Whereas America needs a “housing first” policy that includes transitional housing for those with special needs, community living opportunities, and affordable rental apartments and homes that are available for all families, women, and children;

Whereas there are cities and towns across America where local housing authorities and nonprofit housing organizations, such as Habitat For Humanity, the Local Initiatives Support Coalition, and the Enterprise Foundation, have created scores of affordable and high quality apartments and neighborhood associations for low-income families that are connected to public transportation and employment corridors;

Whereas Federal programs that expand affordable housing programs for the involuntary homeless should encourage program participants to look for work in a timely and reasonable manner;

Whereas the collapse of the residential housing market has resulted in an unemployment rate in the construction industry of 17 percent; and

Whereas according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, every \$10,000,000,000 dollars spent through the National Housing Trust Fund will create 122,000 new jobs in the construction trades and 30,000 new ongoing jobs in the operation of the rental housing: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

3 (1) given the severe emotional, health, and fi-
 4 nancial consequences that result from being home-
 5 less, involuntary homelessness for families, women,
 6 and children should be eliminated;

7 (2) the Federal Government should, to the max-
 8 imum extent possible, provide adequate funding for
 9 the rental housing voucher program under section 8
 10 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, the Com-
 11 munity Development Block Grant program, and the
 12 HOME Investment Partnerships program, so States,
 13 municipalities, and public housing agencies can part-
 14 ner with nonprofit and for-profit housing developers
 15 to renovate, construct, and provide affordable hous-
 16 ing opportunities for all involuntarily homeless fami-
 17 lies, women, and children;

1 (3) legislation should be enacted that provides
2 to the National Housing Trust Fund the
3 \$1,000,000,000 amount requested in the President's
4 Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request; and

5 (4) the Federal Government should move away
6 from a "shelter first" housing policy and instead
7 promote a "housing first" policy that provides em-
8 ployment and training opportunities, transportation,
9 and other self-sufficiency services to help the invol-
10 untarily homeless.

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