

It reveals that 20 percent of the male homeless population are veterans. It reveals that 51 percent of individual homeless veterans had disabilities, 51 percent who need our help, 51 percent who will benefit from having a person whose job it is to monitor and to make sure that they are taken care of.

Further, it would reveal that 70 percent have substance abuse problems, which is something that we really don't like to talk about. We know that it exists, and we know that something can be done about it, but you need someone who is there as a sentinel, as a watchman, to make sure that these needs are taken care of.

Many of them developed their substance abuse problems while in the military, while serving the country. That is unfortunate, but it is a fact. What we want to do is to make sure that we take care of all of them.

I am so honored to say to you that this bill has received great bipartisan support in the past, overwhelmingly so, I might add.

I also want to just thank my colleagues by reminding us of Ruth Smeltzer's words:

Some measure their lives by days and years, others by heartthrobs, passions, and tears; but the surest measure under the God's Sun is what for others in your lifetime have you done.

I want to thank all who are going to do what they can to help eliminate homelessness among the veterans population and those who will support this piece of legislation. Hopefully, we will get it passed in the Senate such that we won't next term find ourselves supporting this same legislation.

I thank the ranking member again so much for her many years of service and for her support for this legislation as well as for the many years of support that she has accorded those who have lived in the streets of life.

God bless her, and God bless our country.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, in closing, just to reiterate and, again, congratulate and associate our remarks with the fine gentleman's from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), one can see that his hard work and advocacy and his passion for this issue is unparalleled. We certainly want to continue to support him, and we urge the support of this body for his fine bill here, H.R. 251.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support to H.R. 251, the "Homes for Heroes Act of 2015," which would amend the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act to establish in the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs.

Our military veterans deserve our deepest gratitude for the courage and valor they demonstrated in service while defending the United States of America.

I support this bill strongly because it ensure veterans fair access to HUD housing and homeless assistance programs, coordinates all HUD programs and activities relating to veterans, and better serves as a HUD liaison with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Also, terminating the position of Special Assistant for Veterans Programs in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs would create more coordinated relations that will better serve the needs of our nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, today, in our country, there are approximately 107,000 veterans (male and female) who are homeless on any given night.

And perhaps twice as many (200,000) experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year.

Many other veterans are considered near homeless or at risk because of their poverty, lack of support from family and friends, and dismal living conditions in cheap hotels or in overcrowded or substandard housing.

In my hometown of Houston for example, between the years 2010 and 2012, the number of homeless veterans increased from 771 to 1,162.

President Obama and the Congress made a commitment to end homelessness by 2015.

However, even with all the progress this administration has made, until we have every veteran permanently sheltered in the United States, we have not succeeded.

I have always devoted myself in these efforts, as I know of the kind of impact assisting our heroes to get back on their feet can have on the well-being of our communities.

H.R. 251, the "Homes for Heroes Act of 2015," is a positive step towards the right direction in our effort to support our nation's heroes, who have put their lives on the line for our protection.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let this issue of homelessness continue.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in support of H.R. 251.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 251.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE EFFICIENCY ACT

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1047) to authorize private nonprofit organizations to administer permanent housing rental assistance provided through the Continuum of Care Program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1047

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Housing Assistance Efficiency Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER RENTAL ASSISTANCE.

Subsection (g) of section 423 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11383(g)) is amended by inserting "private nonprofit organization," after "unit of general local government,".

SEC. 3. REALLOCATION OF FUNDS.

Paragraph (1) of section 414(d) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11373(d)(1)) is amended by striking "twice" and inserting "once".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1047, the Housing Assistance Efficiency Act, introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS). This bill makes a technical correction to the 2009 HEARTH Act amendments to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

H.R. 1047 will accomplish two goals:

First, it would restore the ability of nonprofit organizations to administer permanent housing rental assistance provided through the McKinney-Vento Continuum of Care program.

Second, it would authorize the HUD Secretary to reallocate any housing assistance provided from the Emergency Solutions Grants Program that is unused or returned or that becomes available after the minimum allocation requirements under McKinney-Vento have been met on an annual rather than on a semiannual basis.

In 2009, the HEARTH Act amended McKinney-Vento to combine the Shelter Plus Care program and the supportive housing programs into a single, competitive program.

When combining the activities of the previous programs into one, the HEARTH Act also created a new requirement that only States, units of local governments, or Public Housing Agencies—PHAs—could administer rental assistance. Previously, these public entities had used private nonprofit organizations to administer the assistance.

H.R. 1047 corrects an unintended consequence of the HEARTH Act by restoring nonprofit participation. The bill maximizes community flexibility to allow existing nonprofits that operate leased housing to homeless families and individuals to continue to manage their McKinney-Vento grants as rental assistance as well as to continue to develop innovative practices that assist homeless families and individuals.

Finally, H.R. 1047 reduces a regulatory burden by requiring HUD to reallocate unused Emergency Solutions Grants Program funds only once per year. As I understand from HUD and many nonprofit organizations, there are very few unused funds available; yet, a complicated reallocation program, as required by current law, must be conducted twice a year even if the amount is miniscule.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this commonsense legislation that is supported by the administration and many of the nonprofit organizations that continue to serve homeless populations with limited resources.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my colleague from California (Mr. PETERS) for working on this important issue and introducing this bill.

This bill, entitled the Housing Assistance Efficiency Act, makes two key changes to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act that are long overdue.

Specifically, this bill is designed to fix two technical problems that have arisen in HUD's homeless assistance programs due to technical errors in the language in the HEARTH Act, which was a bipartisan bill that significantly reformed the homeless assistance programs in 2009.

Among other things, HUD's homeless assistance programs help homeless people pay rent when they move out of shelters or off the streets and into housing.

Since the inception of these programs, local nonprofit organizations have received funding from HUD to administer efficient and cost-effective rental assistance programs, working with local landlords to get places for homeless people to live.

Unfortunately, in 2009, when certain programs were merged under the HEARTH Act, these nonprofits became ineligible to directly administer permanent rental assistance.

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This unintentional result of the HEARTH Act has created huge uncertainty on the ground for many nonprofits who work hard to house our homeless populations across the country. The permanent fix in H.R. 1047 would be extremely helpful for communities that are working to end homelessness for chronic individuals, veterans, children, and other populations.

The second provision in H.R. 1047 addresses the Emergency Solutions Grants Program, a program aimed at homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing activities. The bill would amend the current HUD requirement to reallocate unused, returned, or otherwise newly available funds twice per year to just once per year. This change provides HUD and local agencies with administrative relief, while having no negative impact on beneficiaries of these programs.

In addition, this program is supported by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, a national advocacy organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States. An identical bill passed the House last December on the suspension calendar by voice vote. I urge my colleagues to again vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Today, I rise to urge passage of the Housing Assistance Efficiency Act, a bill that I introduced earlier this year. As the ranking member said, an identical version of this legislation passed the House by voice vote last December.

Many laws are intended to ensure efficiency in Federal agencies but often have unintended consequences, preventing agencies from serving the public and costing taxpayers money.

Currently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care Program is forced to spend too much time fulfilling administrative obligations, instead of helping individuals and families transition out of homelessness and putting them on a path to independent living.

This legislation will reduce government inefficiency and make it easier for Americans struggling to find a foothold to access the already existing resources available to them.

Twice each fiscal year, HUD has to reallocate unused or returned funds in the Emergency Solutions Grants Program. Because funds are almost never unused or returned under this program, the reallocation of funds takes a lot of time and human capital to complete but with little end purpose.

It is administratively more efficient to reallocate funds only once per year. This frees up HUD employees to provide more human resources toward better providing service to constituents. We shouldn't saddle HUD with more administrative work that isn't helping anyone.

In addition to mandatory fund allocations, HUD faces a mountain of paperwork as it tries to administer that important system used by more than 3 million Americans each year. Prior to

2009, private nonprofits could administer rental assistance through HUD's Continuum of Care.

Nonprofits are uniquely positioned to handle the needs of those seeking rental assistance, using expertise in individual communities of vulnerable populations to serve the clients where they are.

The HEARTH Act, however, muddled rental assistance laws, and private nonprofits were left off the list of entities allowed to administer rental assistance. Currently, only States, local government units, or public housing agencies can dispense this housing assistance, although nonprofits have substantial experience and the ability to reach vulnerable populations that is often unavailable to government programs.

Private nonprofits can still execute other homelessness programs, but they have to go through public housing agencies or another layer of bureaucracy to get rental assistance to their clients or to the landlord. This creates more bureaucratic burdens when individuals and families really need the help quickly to stay in their homes.

Passing this bill would remedy both these problems, make HUD a more efficient agency, and get homelessness assistance to those who need it more quickly. This is particularly important in San Diego, where access to affordable housing has been continually one of our region's biggest obstacles and where we have the third largest homeless population in the country. By passing today's bill, we can help HUD be more efficient and ensure that community experts and nonprofits are not hamstrung by Federal inaction.

In their statement supporting this legislation, the San Diego Housing Federation said: "This bill removes barriers to helping get important resources to those who need it most." Mr. Speaker, that is what it is all about.

I urge my colleagues to help pass this legislation and take substantive action to improve government efficiency and help fight chronic homelessness in our country.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, we just want to reiterate our support for H.R. 1047. We feel it corrects some problems that have arisen inadvertently.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 1047, the Housing Assistance Efficiency Act. This bill would remove non-essential administrative boundaries in order to better serve our nation's homeless population.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, only a state, local government, or public housing agency may administer housing assistance to our nation's homeless.

This regulation prevents many non-profit agencies—which often have deep ties to our communities—from assisting the homeless.

Like many districts and states, the State of Alabama faces many challenges in addressing the needs of our homeless. We can accomplish this by correcting any unintended legislative consequences and taking action to create the most fast-acting and efficient system of housing assistance possible.

The Housing Assistance Efficiency Act addresses these problems by increasing efficiency, eliminating red tape, and expediting the process of providing safe, stable shelter for homeless communities.

I congratulate my colleague from California, Congressman PETERS, for remaining vigilant and continuing to be a voice for our most vulnerable communities. This is a valuable opportunity to eliminate barriers and offer a faster and more financially responsible approach to assisting the homeless.

While we continue our efforts to help the homeless, we must remain mindful of our long-term goals. I urge my colleagues to help pass this legislation and reaffirm our commitment to the alleviation of homelessness in all of our communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1047.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRESERVATION ENHANCEMENT AND SAVINGS OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2482) to amend the Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2482

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Preservation Enhancement and Savings Opportunity Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. DISTRIBUTIONS AND RESIDUAL RECEIPTS.

Section 222 of the Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990 (12 U.S.C. 4112) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) DISTRIBUTION AND RESIDUAL RECEIPTS.—

“(1) AUTHORITY.—After the date of the enactment of the Preservation Enhancement and Savings Opportunity Act of 2015, the owner of a property subject to a plan of action or use agreement pursuant to this section shall be entitled to distribute—

“(A) annually, all surplus cash generated by the property, but only if the owner is in material compliance with such use agreement including compliance with prevailing physical condition standards established by the Secretary; and

“(B) notwithstanding any conflicting provision in such use agreement, any funds ac-

cumulated in a residual receipts account, but only if the owner is in material compliance with such use agreement and has completed, or set aside sufficient funds for completion of, any capital repairs identified by the most recent third party capital needs assessment.

“(2) OPERATION OF PROPERTY.—An owner that distributes any amounts pursuant to paragraph (1) shall—

“(A) continue to operate the property in accordance with the affordability provisions of the use agreement for the property for the remaining useful life of the property;

“(B) as required by the plan of action for the property, continue to renew or extend any project-based rental assistance contract for a term of not less than 20 years; and

“(C) if the owner has an existing multi-year project-based rental assistance contract for less than 20 years, have the option to extend the contract to a 20-year term.”.

SEC. 3. FUTURE REFINANCINGS.

Section 214 of the Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990 (12 U.S.C. 4104) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) FUTURE FINANCING.—Neither this section, nor any plan of action or use agreement implementing this section, shall restrict an owner from obtaining a new loan or refinancing an existing loan secured by the project, or from distributing the proceeds of such a loan; except that, in conjunction with such refinancing—

“(1) the owner shall provide for adequate rehabilitation pursuant to a capital needs assessment to ensure long-term sustainability of the property satisfactory to the lender or bond issuance agency;

“(2) any resulting budget-based rent increase shall include debt service on the new financing, commercially reasonable debt service coverage, and replacement reserves as required by the lender; and

“(3) for tenants of dwelling units not covered by a project- or tenant-based rental subsidy, any rent increases resulting from the refinancing transaction may not exceed 10 percent per year, except that—

“(A) any tenant occupying a dwelling unit as of time of the refinancing may not be required to pay for rent and utilities, for the duration of such tenancy, an amount that exceeds the greater of—

“(i) 30 percent of the tenant’s income; or

“(ii) the amount paid by the tenant for rent and utilities immediately before such refinancing; and

“(B) this paragraph shall not apply to any tenant who does not provide the owner with proof of income.

Paragraph (3) may not be construed to limit any rent increases resulting from increased operating costs for a project.”.

SEC. 4. IMPLEMENTATION.

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall issue any guidance that the Secretary considers necessary to carry out the provisions added by the amendments made by sections 2 and 3 not later than the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their re-

marks and include extraneous material on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2482, the Preservation Enhancement and Savings Opportunity Act of 2015.

As my colleague from Minnesota, a longtime advocate of this preservation bill, will explain shortly, this bill provides technical changes to the Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990, or LIHPRA, to allow property owners access to their profits while ensuring long-term preservation of affordable, multifamily housing properties.

By correcting the inequities resulting from a fixed return on investment, we are providing for continued preservation of an important asset and facilitating future recapitalization to maximize the remaining useful life of the LIHPRA properties without any cost to the Federal Government.

HUD recognized the need to address this issue in the administration’s fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016 budget requests. Administratively, HUD has removed the limitation on distributions in similar circumstances where it had the authority to do so but has determined it lacks such authority with the LIHPRA portfolio.

This bill ensures the continued viability of the properties through continued adherence to the use agreement. This includes compliance with physical need requirements and requirement to provide for any identified capital needs.

I would like to reemphasize that this provision does not result in a cost to the Federal Government and ensures long-term preservation. I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his hard work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill is the product of years of thoughtful consideration and negotiations. I am very pleased with the compromises that were reached on this bill, especially some additional tenant protections that include rent affordability restrictions for existing tenants.

There are currently about 640 properties that are subject to restrictions in the Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990, otherwise known as LIHPRA. LIHPRA imposed some significant restrictions on property owners, which have proven to be problematic by making it more difficult for property owners to preserve these aging properties.

This bill would help address this issue by providing affected property owners with greater flexibilities on the condition that they comply with basic requirements that ensure that the properties are adequately maintained