

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
AND SHEILA KUEHL

JUNE 14, 2016

**Declaring Homelessness to be a Statewide Humanitarian Crisis**

Los Angeles County (County) is facing a pervasive and deepening homelessness crisis that currently endangers the health and safety of tens and thousands of residents, including veterans, women, children, LGBT youth, persons with disabilities and seniors. The tremendous scale of homelessness in the County threatens the economic stability of the region by burdening emergency medical services and the social services infrastructure.

According to the 2016 Homeless Count released by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the number of homeless persons in the County on any given night is roughly 47,000, including over 6,000 parents and their children. Over 4,000 of the homeless are veterans. Nearly two thirds of the homeless persons live in the City of Los Angeles. Since 2013, the number of homeless women has risen 55%. The number of homeless persons living in encampments, tents and vehicles increased by a staggering 123% from 2013 to 2016. Furthermore, according to the Economic Roundtable, approximately 13,000 people on public assistance become homeless every month in the County.

- MORE -

MOTION

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

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Homelessness is also increasing in the suburbs. The San Fernando Valley's homeless population grew by 35% to 7,335 from 2015 to 2016. In the South Bay, homelessness increased by 10% to 5,913 during the same time period.

The statewide numbers are similarly alarming. In 2015, with 115,738 homeless persons, California accounted for 21% of the nation's homeless population. In 2015, among all states, California had the highest percentage of homeless people counted in unsheltered locations (64% or 73,699 homeless unsheltered persons).

Many homeless people are facing severe threats to their health and safety on a daily basis. Recent research has demonstrated that homeless persons are 3-4 times more likely to die than members of the general population. Studies indicated that premature death most often results from acute and chronic medical conditions aggravated by homeless life.

If an earthquake or flood suddenly left tens of thousands of individuals homeless, the County and State would not hesitate to act swiftly and decisively. Although the causes may be different, the impact is the same. The increasing numbers of displaced homeless persons and the dearth of ongoing resources to stably re-house all homeless individuals warrant and necessitate that the County proclaim the existence of a local emergency.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Send a five signature letter to the California Assembly and Senate asking them to pass a resolution urging the Governor to declare a state of emergency in California (State) due to the increased number of homeless individuals throughout the State.
2. Urge that this state of emergency include:
  - a. Access to \$500 million from the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties to implement statewide re-housing efforts, including street engagement, service triage, crisis housing, permanent housing navigation, rental subsidies, case management, other appropriate and essential services, and any other resources once the state of emergency is declared;

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- b. Immediate orders to deploy State agencies and personnel to help provide housing assistance to homeless camp hotspots in Los Angeles County and other heavily affected areas and to set up emergency command posts and triage site for the coordination of homeless service delivery;
- c. Assemble a State public sector/private sector “Red Team” to develop a short-term and long-term plan to combat homelessness; and
- d. A commitment to identify and develop streams of ongoing funding for localities so they can sustain successful efforts to combat homelessness.

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(YV/DW)