



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 5, 2016

**Contact:** Al Naipo, (213) 974-2222

**Email:** [anaipo@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:anaipo@bos.lacounty.gov)

### **Funding the Fight Against Homelessness**

Following the announcement of a 6 percent increase in the homeless population, Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Sheila Kuehl will ask the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday to seek authority for a potential ballot measure that would raise funding needed to address the crisis.

The Board has been weighing options for raising the money needed to pay for programs to help the homeless, including a parcel tax, marijuana tax, transaction and use tax, redirection of Measure B revenue, and a tax on personal income exceeding \$1 million per year.

In order to preserve the last option, an amendment to State law is necessary. Supervisors Ridley-Thomas and Kuehl's motion directs the Board to "pursue a change in State law to grant counties the authority to seek voter approval of a tax on personal income above \$1 million/year to combat homelessness."

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's 2016 Homeless Count, 46,874 people are homeless on any given night in Los Angeles County – a 6 percent increase from last year.

It also found an 11 percent increase in the number of homeless persons living on the streets, in tents, encampments and vehicles. Though comprising only 9 percent of the general population, African-Americans accounted for almost 39 percent of the homeless population, based on the Homeless Count.

On a positive note, the number of homeless veterans dropped by 30 percent, and there are 18 percent fewer homeless persons among families with children.

"These results demonstrate that much more work remains to be done to address homeless persons living on the streets, who may have chronic health and mental issues and may benefit from affordable housing coupled with intensive home-

and community-based supportive services,” Supervisors Ridley-Thomas and Kuehl said.

“The LAHSA data also clearly demonstrate the efficacy of increased, coordinated and targeted investments for homeless veterans and homeless families,” they added. “Without increased and targeted investments, the tremendous progress in reducing the number of homeless veterans and homeless families would not have occurred.”

The public has expressed concern about the crisis, and a willingness to contribute to the solution. A County-sponsored poll released in April found 68 percent of likely voters would support a sales tax increase to fund programs for the homeless. An even larger number, 76 percent, would back a tax increase on incomes exceeding \$1 million.

###