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SENATOR KEVIN DE LEÓN
2016 JUL 15 A 11:13
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

July 13, 2016

Honorable Dick Monteith
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Stanislaus
1010 10th St., Ste. 6500
Modesto, CA 95354

Dear Supervisor Monteith:

I write to inform you about major efforts the California Legislature is taking to combat homelessness and to call your attention to new programs that are targeted to assist counties implement these initiatives.

As you know, more than 100,000 Californians are homeless on any given day. Homelessness is not limited to big cities in California. It affects the whole community, not just those experiencing instability from their lack of housing.

California has more than one-third of the nation's chronically homeless – those with mental illness or significant other problems. Of the 28,000 chronically homeless in the state, nearly 85 percent are unsheltered, and absorbing the greatest amount of taxpayers' resources. The public costs can often top \$100,000 annually per person for emergency room visits, hospital stays, law enforcement and other social services.

In response to these challenges, a bipartisan coalition of members of the California Senate launched a major initiative in January—called "No Place Like Home"—to combat homelessness. We were proud to have the assistance and guidance of the California State Association of Counties as we crafted this initiative.

I am happy to report to you that the California Legislature and Governor have approved the provisions of the No Place Like Home initiative as part of California's 2016-17 state budget.

The landmark bipartisan legislative package will provide \$2 billion for the housing and treatment of mentally ill Californians who are homeless.

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The No Place Like Home Program will be administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to further the development of permanent supportive housing for persons who are in need of mental health services and are homeless, chronically homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program will be financed through a \$2 billion dollar bond secured by a portion of future Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act of 2004, mental health revenues.

Funding will be available to counties, by application, and funding will be available to all counties that wish to participate. An Advisory Committee will assist HCD to implement the program, and the committee will include three county representatives, to be appointed by the Governor. HCD is also directed to consult with CSAC and other stakeholders to develop the program.

The No Place Like Home Program supports a “housing first” strategy, guided by the core belief that no individual or family in California should ever experience the uncertainty and pain of living without a home. Many homeless advocates and social service experts prefer this approach which has been used successfully in other states because it provides safe, secure housing that creates an environment that allows for wrap-around services, such as mental health treatment to take hold.

We anticipate more information about the program will be distributed by HCD later this year.

In addition to the \$2 billion bond, our recently enacted state budget also includes \$150 million for major funding initiatives to combat homelessness:

- *Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI/SSP) outreach*, to increase participation among homeless persons with disabilities who may be eligible for disability benefits programs.
- *Emergency Solutions Grants*, for activities eligible under the Federal Emergency Solutions Grant Program, which your department administers, including rapidly rehousing individuals and families, preventing families and individuals from becoming homeless, engaging homeless individuals and families living on the street, and operating homeless shelters and providing essential services to shelter residents.
- *CalWORKS Housing Support Program*, to provide assistance to eligible families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

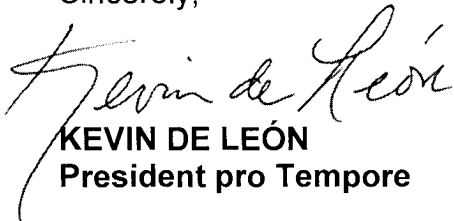
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- *CaWORKS Homeless Assistance*, to reflect elimination of the once-in-a-lifetime restriction on receipt of temporary and permanent homeless assistance and instead making this assistance available once every 12 months.
- “*Bringing Families Home*,” to establish a county matching grant program to reduce homelessness among families who are part of the child welfare system.

I urge you to closely follow the implementation of the \$2 billion homeless housing bond and these other programs, and to begin laying the groundwork to apply for the state funding.

I recognize that the problem of homelessness really has to be solved by *local government officials*, and the California Senate and our state government colleagues looks forward to partnering with you in these efforts.

Sincerely,



KEVIN DE LEÓN
President pro Tempore

KDL:lc