

March 23, 2016

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
Chairman  
Committee on Financial Services  
2129 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling:

Homelessness in many parts of this country has reached crisis proportions and it is my strong belief that Congress must take action to recognize the crisis at hand. That is why I have introduced a bill, *The Ending Homelessness Act of 2016*, which represents a bold and comprehensive approach to ending homelessness in this country once and for all. I urge you to join me in taking swift action to pass this important piece of legislation so that all Americans may have a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home. Additionally, I am reiterating my previous request for a series of hearings on the state of homelessness in America—a request that I, along with 25 of our colleagues on the Financial Services Committee, made to you on March 19, 2015, but have received no response or action.

Although our country has made some progress towards the goal of ending homelessness in America as a direct result of the Administration's Opening Doors strategy, as well as additional funding targeted to homeless veterans, the most recent point-in-time count from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shows that major progress has virtually stalled in the absence of new funds. It is simply unconscionable that 564,708 of our neighbors across the country are living without a place to call home, and that homelessness in major metropolitan areas in particular has increased by 3 percent since 2014. In Los Angeles alone, homelessness has increased by 20 percent since 2014. Despite these startling statistics, Mr. Chairman, you have refused to hold even one hearing on the issue of homelessness. You have also failed to put forth any major Republican proposals to address homelessness. We cannot continue to simply express our concern for the homeless in this country; we must be willing to take the steps that are necessary to achieve this goal, including providing the necessary resources.

The bill that I have just introduced represents a bold solution to the formidable challenge of homelessness in this country. Over five years, this bill would provide \$13 billion *over and above* annual appropriations to several programs and initiatives that

will help the 407,000 households who are currently homeless obtain access to both housing and supportive services to help them achieve positive life outcomes. Specifically, this bill would provide the following funding amounts over a five-year period, designed as emergency relief funding over and above annual appropriations to address the homelessness crisis in America:

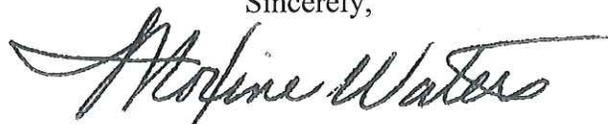
- \$5 billion in McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants funding, with a significant portion of the funding targeted for chronically homeless individuals and families, which is expected to fund approximately 85,000 new permanent supportive housing units;
- \$2.5 billion for special purpose Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), which is expected to provide affordable housing for homeless families, youth, and individuals on an ongoing basis and is expected to create an additional 295,000-300,000 subsidized HCV units;
- \$1.05 billion annually in mandatory spending dedicated to the National Housing Trust Fund, which in the first five years of funding is expected to create approximately 25,000 new units affordable to extremely low income households, ensuring that rents are affordable for tenants;
- \$500 million in outreach funding to ensure that homeless people are connected to the resources they need; and,
- \$20 million in technical assistance funding to help states and localities align health and housing systems.

The targeted resources included in this bill are expected to functionally end homelessness in this country. My bill would also permanently authorize the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to help ensure that we have the oversight capacity and resources we need to maintain the progress that we achieve.

In the recent past, Congress provided emergency relief funding in a bipartisan manner to address the dire needs of American families in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Katrina relief bill was passed almost unanimously and serves as a precedent for coming together in a bipartisan way to help American families in crisis situations. I believe that this is another one of those situations in which Congress can and should come together in a bipartisan way to provide relief for the thousands of homeless Americans.

I look forward to working with you in passing this important piece of legislation so that any American living on the street can have access to a safe, decent and affordable place to call home.

Sincerely,



MAXINE WATERS  
Ranking Member