



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: July 13, 2010

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HELPING OUR VETERANS FIND LOCAL HOUSING IN THE NATION THEY PROTECT (DISTRICT: ALL)

SUMMARY:

Overview

California is home to more than a million and a half veterans who have served honorably and made great sacrifices in defense of our freedoms and to protect us from foreign threats. Unfortunately, too many veterans wind up homeless in virtually every urban core throughout America, including downtown San Diego. Our Board of Supervisors remains committed to helping our veterans who have shed their blood and risked their lives for our country. To achieve this, we need substantially more federal resources.

House Bill (H.R.) 4810, the "End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010", which extends through Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, increases the amount of the authorization of appropriations for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans. The bill, which has received bi-partisan support, requires the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each VA medical center conducts outreach to landlords, encouraging and facilitating program participation. The bill also directs the VA Secretary to coordinate with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide assistance to homeless veterans in accessing HUD's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program.

The bill further authorizes appropriations for FY 2012 and thereafter for VA financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families occupying permanent housing. H.R. 4810 tries to reach all veterans and places a focus on promoting awareness of assistance for homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children.

Today's action will reinforce the County of San Diego's support for the "End Veteran

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Homelessness Act of 2010” and reinforce our commitment to helping our veterans.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR COX AND SUPERVISOR ROBERTS

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for signature by the Chairwoman to the U.S. Senators representing California, San Diego’s Congressional Delegation, the County’s Washington D.C. Representative, and other interested parties in support of H.R. 4810, the End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010.]

Fiscal Impact

There is no impact to the County General Fund.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

California is home to more than a million and a half veterans who have served honorably and made great sacrifices in defense of our freedoms and to protect us from foreign threats. Unfortunately, too many veterans wind up homeless in virtually every urban core throughout America, including downtown San Diego. Our Board of Supervisors remains committed to helping our veterans who have shed their blood and risked their lives for our country. To achieve this, we need substantially more federal resources.

H.R. 4810, the “End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010”, which extends through FY 2010, increases the amount of the authorization of appropriations for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans. The bill, which has received bi-partisan support, requires the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each VA medical center conducts outreach to landlords, encouraging and facilitating program participation. The bill also directs the VA Secretary to coordinate with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide assistance to homeless veterans in accessing HUD’s Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program.

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There are many benefits from the bill that complement our local efforts to assist our veterans. For example, Section 4 of H.R. 4810 would require the VA to provide for housing specialists, including peer specialists who were formerly homeless veterans, for the HUD-Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. These specialists would conduct landlord

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outreach activities, including encouraging and facilitating the landlord's participation in the HUD-VASH program, mediating disputes between the veterans and the landlords and establishing and maintaining a list of available rental units. As of August of 2009, VA data showed that it had only awarded about 5,500 HUD-VASH vouchers out of 20,000 available vouchers. This provision would provide the VA with an important tool for awarding the remaining housing vouchers. The County of San Diego's Housing and Community Development (HCD)

Department indicates that this would be helpful in assisting the local VA to make more housing referrals available to HCD to disperse.

Additionally, Section 5 of H.R. 4810 would extend and increase funding for a supportive services program for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing. Section 604 of Public Law 110-387 (122 Stat. 4110) created the supportive services program to help veterans gain access to appropriate services so that they are less likely to experience housing instability and are more likely to maintain their self-sufficiency. Examples of supportive services include help with personal financial planning, income support services and legal services to help veterans with issues that interfere with their ability to obtain or retain housing. The VA is in the process of implementing section 604 and informs the Committee on Veterans' Affairs that the regulations define supportive services to also include rental debt assistance. Section 5 of the bill would ensure that this program does not expire at the end of FY 2011 and provides for sufficient resources and a significant phased-in funding increase to \$100 million per year.

It is estimated that between 20 and 40 percent of the homeless population in San Diego County are veterans. Supporting this bill will allow our veterans to access more VA benefits to help them embark and continue on a path of self-sufficiency.

Respectfully submitted,

SUPERVISOR COX
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT

SUPERVISOR ROBERTS
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 1 and District 4, Board of Supervisors

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

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