



Memorandum

**TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

FROM: Leslye Krutko

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 13, 2008

Approved

Christine J. Shipper

Date

2/13/08

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL HOUSING LEGISLATION: H.R. 840 (CARSON) – HOMELESS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND RAPID TRANSITION TO HOUSING ACT OF 2007 AND S. 1518 (REED) – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TO END HOMELESSNESS ACT OF 2007, IF AMENDED.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The Mayor and City Council support H.R. 840 (Carson) and support S. 1518 (Reed) if amended.
2. The Committee provide a one-week turn around for Mayor and City Council review.

OUTCOME

If the Rules and Open Government Committee and the Mayor and City Council accept staff's recommendation, the City lobbyist could begin seeking support for H.R. 840 (Carson) and amendments to S. 1518 (Reed).

BACKGROUND

The 2007-2008 Federal Legislative cycle has featured several bills that address homelessness. The bills are of particular interest to the City's Ten-Year Strategy to End Homelessness. An analysis of H.R. 840 and S. 1518 is attached to this memo for the Rules and Open Government Committee's consideration.

ANALYSIS

A fact sheet and analysis of H.R. 840 and S. 1518 are attached.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- Criteria 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criteria 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criteria 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

This legislative item does not meet any of the above criteria.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, Intergovernmental Relations Director in the City Manager's Office and the City's federal lobbyist, Patton Boggs.

POLICY ALIGNMENT

The attached fact sheets and analyses are consistent with the Council-adopted 2008 Legislative Guiding Principles, and the Council-adopted guidelines.

CEQA

Not a project


LESLYE KRUTKO
Director of Housing

For more information call Melissa Whatley, Policy Manager, at (408) 975-4418

H.R. 840 (CARSON) – HOMELESS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND RAPID TRANSITION TO HOUSING ACT OF 2007

What's the issue the bill is trying to resolve?

H.R.840 (Carson), the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH), amends the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and consolidates all Housing and Urban Development (HUD) McKinney-Vento housing programs except the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) into one competitive program with a broad set of eligible activities for funding. These activities include homeless prevention, permanent or transitional housing for any homeless population, and supportive services. HEARTH also provides:

- 1) Definition of Homeless - amends the HUD definition of homelessness to include families and individuals sharing housing of others due to loss of housing or economic hardship and persons living in motels, hotels, and campgrounds due to the lack of adequate permanent housing. Additionally, H.R. 840 defines "homeless individual with a disability" to include a physical, mental or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug addiction. HEARTH differs from its companion bill in the Senate (S. 1518 Reed), by including in the definition of homeless individuals released from prison on probation or parole if those persons otherwise meet the definition of homelessness. HEARTH does not add families under the current definition of "chronic homeless."
- 2) Homeless Prevention Activities - requires entities that receive ESG grants, like San José, and serve one or more geographic areas to establish a community homeless assistance planning board for each geographic area applying for HUD McKinney-Vento funds. Additionally, the legislation adds "homeless prevention activities" to the eligible services that can receive funding under the Continuum of Care Program. The homeless prevention activities included under the legislation are: education, family support services for homeless youth, victim services, and mental health services.
- 3) Continuum of Care Program - consolidates the current Supportive Housing Program (SHP) and Shelter Plus Care Program (S+C) into the "Continuum of Care Program." Under the Continuum of Care Program, both permanent housing and homeless prevention activities are an eligible use of funds.
- 4) Flexibility – restores flexibility of geographic areas to set their own priorities in the use of HUD homeless assistance funds.
- 5) Increase the authorization level - for HUD homeless assistance programs to \$2.5 billion annually (current appropriation is \$1.5 billion).

How would the passage of this bill affect San José?

H.R. 840 preserves community flexibility to use HUD homeless assistance funds to meet the most pressing local needs and provides new and flexible resources for homelessness prevention. Additionally, the legislation amends the HUD definition of homelessness to include persons sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing or economic hardship and persons living in motels, hotels, and campgrounds due to the lack of adequate housing. These living arrangements are currently recognized as homeless under other federal laws, but not the HUD statute. By expanding the HUD definition of homeless and aligning the definition with that used by other

federal agencies, communities, including San José, will be able to assist more homeless families and prevent homelessness.

As San José continues to address the issue of homelessness through the Ten-Year Strategy to End Homelessness, H.R. 840 will assist in the provision of necessary funding, definitions and programs to end homelessness in San José.

What is staff's Proposed Position?

Staff recommends that the City support H.R. 840.

Who are the bill's supporters and opponents?

As of January 29, 2007 the following organizations issued statements supporting H.R. 840: Catholic Charities USA, Family Promise, Housing Assistance Council, National Coalition for the Homeless, National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, National Network for Youth, National Network to End Domestic Violence, and Volunteers of America. Currently, there is no registered opposition.

What is the current status of the measure?

On April 13, 2007, H.R. 840 was referred to the House subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity.

S. 1518 (REED) – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TO END HOMELESSNESS ACT OF 2007

What's the issue the bill is trying to resolve?

S. 1518 (Reed), the Community Partnership to End Homelessness Act of 2007 (CPEHA), would take a number of actions to make the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) homeless assistance programs more flexible, performance based, and accountable in an effort to accomplish the goals of preventing and ending homelessness.

- 1) Definition of Homeless—S. 1518 redefines homelessness to include families that move from time to time with little stability and those who double-up living with family or friends.
- 2) Emergency Homeless Prevention and Shelter Grants Program—the existing Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Program would be renamed, but the funds would continue to be allocated to jurisdictions under the current funding formula. The legislation would require entities that receive ESG grants and serve one or more geographic areas to allocate ESG funds in consultation with a community board. Additionally, between 10-15% of HUD McKinney-Vento appropriation would be required to be spent on ESG.
- 3) Community Homeless Assistance Program—reauthorizes and consolidates HUD's Continuum of Care Programs (Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, and Moderate Rehabilitation/SRO) into a single Community Homeless Assistance Program allowing for a single application for funding from a "Collaborative Applicant."
- 4) High-Performing Communities—communities that demonstrate they are significantly reducing homelessness would be given additional flexibility in the use of their funding.
- 5) Use of Funds—collaborative applicants can apply for funding for homeless prevention and housing stabilization. At least 30% of the McKinney-Vento funds shall be used nationally for permanent housing for homeless individuals with disabilities and homeless families that include a disabled adult and 10% of the fund shall be used for permanent housing for homeless families with children.
- 6) Increases the authorization level – for HUD homeless assistance programs to approximately \$2.5 billion annually. (The current appropriation is \$1.5 billion for fiscal year 2007.) A portion of these funds, \$440 million, are for programs to help families that do not meet the definition of homeless, including those families who are living in hotels and motels.

How would the passage of this bill affect San José?

This legislation will streamline the application process, provide more flexibility, and allow the City of San José to assist more homeless people, especially homeless families that are not currently included in the definition of "chronic homelessness."

Under S. 1518 (Reed), local collaboratives, such as the Santa Clara County Collaborative to End Homelessness, of which the City of San Jose is a member, would be eligible to receive funding for administrative expenses. This funding has not previously been available and will help address the collective goal of the City of San José and Santa Clara County to end chronic homelessness in ten years.

What is staff's Proposed Position?

Staff recommends that the City support S. 1518 if amended. The following amendment is recommended: (1) Remove the community board requirement for ESG. For the City of San Jose, creating and managing a community board given the small amount of funds it receives (approximately \$440,000 annually) is an enormous burden.

Who are the bill's supporters and opponents?

As of February 8, 2008, staff has not identified any supporters or opponents of S. 1518.

What is the current status of the measure?

On September 19, 2007, S. 1518 passed out of Committee and is currently pending full Senate consideration.