

MEMO

To: Congresswoman
From: Joseph
CC: Carrie, Hector
Date: Wed, 7/31/19
Re: San Gabriel Valley Homelessness update

Hi ma'am, I wanted to provide you an update on homelessness in the SGV. As you know, the SGV saw an overall increase in homelessness of 24% in 2019; however, homelessness in the entire county only went up 12%. The count in 2018 for the SGV showed 3605 people homeless in the area, while this year's found 4479. Of the 4479: 3292 were living on the streets, 1055 reported suffering from serious mental illness, and 590 reported having a substance abuse disorder. Here is some more specific info on our cities (info is from the Greater LA 2019 Homeless Count Results for Service Planning Area 3 - San Gabriel Valley published on 7/26/19):

- o Avocado Height: 34 in 2018, 123 in 2019 (increase)
- o Azusa: 143 in 2018, 325 in 2019 (increase)
- o Baldwin Park: 289 in 2018, 273 in 2019 (decrease)
- o Bassett: TBD
- o Covina: 97 in 2018, 180 in 2019 (increase); Covina was listed as "under development" in the Homeless Count Report so I pulled this information from the SGV Tribune
 - o According to the SGV Tribune: Residents in March said they saw a spike of people experiencing homelessness on the streets, especially at Covina Park, which they attributed to the nearby Inter-Community hospital's mental health unit. The area is also home to Aurora Charter Oak Hospital and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' East San Gabriel Valley Health Center.
- o Duarte: 15 in 2018, 29 in 2019 (increase)
- o El Monte: 488 in 2018, 403 in 2019 (decrease)
 - o According to the SGV Tribune: The city made headway by adding a handful of affordable housing units targeted for veterans. The county approved a homeless plan focusing on job opportunities and housing units in 2017. Companies such as Outdoor Research, an outdoors sports apparel manufacturer based in Seattle, has made plans to move to the city and capture a workforce here.
- o Glendora: 60 in 2018, 64 in 2019 (increase)
- o Industry: 44 in 2018, 149 in 2019 (increase)
- o Irwindale: 24 in 2018, 112 in 2019 (increase)
- o La Puente: 16 in 2018, 35 in 2019 (increase)
- o La Verne: 7 in 2018, 21 in 2019 (increase)
- o Monrovia: 69 in 2018, 75 in 2019 (increase)
- o San Dimas: 13 in 2018, 10 in 2019 (decrease)
- o Valinda: 9 in 2018, 16 in 2019 (increase)
- o West Covina: 249 in 2018, 139 in 2019 (decrease)
 - o According to the SGV Tribune: The city credited the decrease to the city's police department and public services maintenance staff, who have worked with nonprofit organizations, residents, Los Angeles County Sheriff's and mental health departments.

At the beginning of 2019, it was announced that Azusa, Covina, Duarte, Glendora and West Covina were set to receive \$343,250 in Measure H funding to hire case managers to help local homeless people connect with services. Voters approved Measure H in 2017, which was a quarter-cent county sales tax to fund homeless services.

Our bill ideas:

1. (NO DRAFT TEXT YET) / Bill to repeal the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) Payment Prohibition
 - Problem: The Los Angeles County Homeless Count reported 1055 homeless individuals in the SGV were suffering from a serious mental illness.
 - Solution: The bil would repeal the IMD payment prohibition so places like Los Angeles County could tap into federal funds to cover Medicaid-eligible individuals (age 21-64) who are patients in IMDs. This would help homeless individuals who are Medicaid-eligible and need in-patient psychiatric care. Sen. Feinstein is also interested in this issue.
2. (HAVE DRAFT TEXT; GIVEN TO GN IN JULY) / A Bridge to End Homelessness Act of 2019
 - Problem: There is a serious shortage of temporary housing for homeless, and concerns over the safety of encampment areas.
 - Solution: This bill would establish a grant program that prioritizes the following:

- o A city or county must identify a building adjacent to a high-density homeless population to establish a temporary shelter.
- o The site will stand for a minimum of three years or enough time for the city or county to build permanent supportive housing.
- o The site must be furnished with on-site mental health, employment, addiction and wellness resources.
- o The city or county must have a plan to restore the encampment sites into safe, clean, public passageways.
- I have emailed the text to Financial Services Chairwoman Maxine Water's staff for input.
- I sent the draft text to the following groups last week: LA County Department of Mental Health, City of Covina, City of El Monte, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and the San Gabriel Valley CoG Regional Homelessness Coordinator.

Other bills that could help the homelessness crisis:

1. HR 2698, the Law Enforcement Training for Mental Health Crisis Response Act (Kendra Horn, D-OK)
 - Problem: Law enforcement can be the first to interact with homeless individuals, especially those suffering from a serious mental illness.
 - Solution: This bill provides grants to law enforcement departments to obtain behavioral health crisis response training. This grant appropriates \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022.
2. HR 2519, the Improving Mental Health Access from the Emergency Department Act (Raul Ruiz, D-CA)
 - Problem: According to the SGV Tribune, "Residents in March said they saw a spike of people experiencing homelessness on the streets, especially at Covina Park, which they attributed to the nearby Inter-Community hospital's mental health unit."
 - Solution: This bill would authorize a competitive grant program (\$15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025) for emergency departments to implement innovative approaches to securing prompt access to appropriate follow-on care for individuals experiencing acute mental health episodes. Such innovative approaches could include:
 - o Expediting transition to post-emergency care through expanded coordination with regional service providers, assessment, peer navigators, bed availability tracking and management, transfer protocol development, networking infrastructure development, and transportation services.
 - o Increasing the supply of inpatient psychiatric beds and alternative care settings, such as regional emergency psychiatric units.
 - o Expanding approaches to providing psychiatric care in the emergency department—including tele-psychiatric support and other remote psychiatric consultations, peak period crisis clinics, or creating dedicated psychiatric emergency service units.
3. HR 1329, the Medicaid Reentry Act (Paul Tonko, D-NY)
 - Problem: The Los Angeles County Homeless Count reported 590 homeless individuals in the SGV had a substance use disorder.
 - Solution: Medicaid is generally prohibited from paying for expenses incurred while a beneficiary is incarcerated, even when an incarcerated individual remains Medicaid eligible. The Medicaid Reentry Act would grant states limited new flexibility to restart benefits for Medicaid-eligible incarcerated individuals 30 days prior to release. By allowing states to restart Medicaid benefits prior to release, states would be able to more readily provide effective addiction treatment and care coordination services pre-release, allowing for smoother transitions back into the community.