

H.R. 7105 – HOMELESS VETERANS CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

POSITION: The Chamber's Defense, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee voted to SUPPORT the bill on July 1, 2020. The Chamber's Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT the bill on July 14, 2020. The Chamber's Board of Directors voted to SUPPORT the bill on July 23, 2020.

RATIONALE: Policy adjustments are worthwhile if it will result in moving veterans experiencing homelessness off the streets of San Diego.

STATUS: The bill was introduced by Rep. Mike Levin [CA-49] on June 4, 2020 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the House Committee on the Budget. Companion legislation in the Senate, S. 3899 was introduced by Sen. Jerry Moran [KS] on June 4, 2020 and referred to Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs'.

SUMMARY

The Homeless Veterans Coronavirus Response Act enables the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to have more flexibility to respond to veterans who are experiencing homelessness during a public health emergency. This legislation would allow for additional allocation of funds for transitional housing, including identifying locations for temporary care sites and expediting inspection processes to ensure quick implementation of temporary care facilities. The bill also ensures veterans experiencing homelessness who participate in a VA homeless program have access to VA telehealth services.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

Communities and businesses disproportionately impacted by homelessness, or working within the homelessness system, will be impacted by a change of policy.

SUPPORTERS

- Bipartisan Congressional co-sponsors from California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Tennessee

OPPONENTS

- None known

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

- Veterans experiencing homelessness are a vulnerable population and the pandemic has exasperated the effects of homelessness.
- With veteran unemployment rising, more veterans could face homelessness and steps need to be taken to ensure support from the VA and the community.
- This legislation would create an avenue for the VA to provide essential services and care items to veterans experiencing homelessness.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

- The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Cost Estimate is unknown.
- There could be a lack of control or transparency should some of the proposed changes be enacted.

MORE INFORMATION

The bill allows the VA to collaborate with outside groups to manage temporary care facilities. Additionally, the VA would be able to use funds to supply temporary care facilities with items like food, blankets, clothing, shelter, transportation, hygiene and "telecommunications equipment". The bill also increases the

maximum "Grant and Per Diem (GPD)" per diem rate. The GPD could be used to pay for the items listed above like, food, clothing, etc.