

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 194

BY REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Housing Corporation to study issues related to the rising number of homeless individuals in Louisiana, the lack of affordable housing in our state, and to identify potential funding sources to address these issues and to report its findings to the House of Representatives and the House Committee on Appropriations of the Legislature of Louisiana prior to March 1, 2023.

WHEREAS, homelessness in our nation impacts all races, creeds, and genders; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development reported a 7.9% increase in homelessness in Louisiana between 2019 and 2020; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, as of January 2020, Louisiana had an estimated 3,173 persons experiencing homelessness on any given day, with that total comprised in part of families, veterans, unaccompanied young adults age 18-24, and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness; and

WHEREAS, agencies and non-profits across the state that offer services to the homeless report increased needs since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the numerous hurricanes and other natural disasters impacting our state; and

WHEREAS, homeless service providers in most regions of this state are unable to regularly attend legislative hearings and provide vital information to lawmakers on the depth and breadth of the homelessness problem our state is facing; and

WHEREAS, new homeless counts for Louisiana are expected to be released in the next several months and will show the extent of Hurricane Ida's impact on homelessness in our state; and

WHEREAS, in addition to recent devastating natural disasters, other factors such as the short supply of affordable housing, the increase in average rental prices, increasing rates of inflation, and rising flood and insurance premiums, cut away at the financial security of our population pushing some families and individuals further towards housing insecurity; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is a shortage of affordable rental homes available to extremely low income households in the state, with only 45 such homes available for every 100 renter households as of 2020; and

WHEREAS, homelessness has a direct impact on access to healthcare, poor health outcomes, poor rates of participation in all levels of education, and negatively affects wage-earning potential for individuals suffering homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the use of state and federal funding on programs and assistance targeted to decrease homelessness by providing safe, affordable housing for families and individuals experiencing homelessness seems to have a direct impact on improving access to healthcare and health outcomes and reducing recurring state expenses for incarceration and foster care.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Housing Corporation to study issues related to the rising number of homeless individuals in Louisiana and the lack of affordable housing and to identify potential funding sources to address these issues, and to report its findings to the House of Representatives and the House Committee on Appropriations of the Legislature of Louisiana prior to March 1, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Housing Corporation is requested to conduct a public hearing for purposes of studying this issue to solicit comments from the public and interested stakeholder organizations on the following topics:

(1) Annual point-in-time homelessness counts in the state of Louisiana by Continuums of Care and other homeless service providers.

(2) Homeless service providers' capacity, shelter bed counts, and the availability of affordable housing in communities across the state.

(3) Information concerning factors contributing to increases in family homelessness across the state.

(4) Information concerning the number of children enrolled in public schools experiencing homelessness in this state.

(5) Information concerning the relationship between housing stability to decreased government expenses on healthcare, incarceration, foster care, and other programs for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

(6) Potential state and federal funding sources for the construction or rehabilitation of non-congregant shelters, deeply affordable housing, and other solutions to keep Louisiana families from experiencing homelessness.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES