

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

November 26, 2019

Homeless Youth Awareness Month

Homeless Youth Awareness Month was initially declared in 2007. Since then, November has been a time to acknowledge children and families experiencing homelessness and focus our efforts on increasing access to housing. On any given night this year, an estimated 4,021 young adults ages 18 to 24 experience homelessness in Los Angeles County, which is a 22% increase from 2018. Among these young people, 29% report current or previous involvement in the child welfare system and 62% report previous or current involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice systems. Along with losing their home, community, friends, and routines as well as their sense of stability and safety, many youth experiencing homelessness are also victims of trauma. It's clear: there is an interconnected relationship between system involvement and housing instability, and this relationship most adversely impacts young people. That is why the Board of Supervisors continues to identify and create housing opportunities for all youth, including those who are system-involved, preventing many from entering the cycle of homelessness. However, more can and must be done.

Youth experiencing homelessness are frequently hidden from plain sight. Instead

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of sleeping on sidewalks or in shelters, they often stay with friends or couch surf. While trying to survive on the streets, youth are exposed to countless dangers, with an increased likelihood of substance abuse, early parenthood, impulsivity, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and a vulnerability to being trafficked. Furthermore, being unhoused at a young age increases the risk of prolonged and chronic homelessness. These risks and the overwhelming harm to young people must compel the County to work toward establishing stable housing for youth, as well as supportive connections to caring adults and access to services. We must increase awareness of youth homelessness as we continue to develop solutions to solve this urgent problem.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim November 2019 as Homeless Youth Awareness Month in Los Angeles County.

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