

Public Policy Memorandum

Subject: To eradicate Homelessness

Homelessness. It is and has been a long standing public issue. Legislatures of Washington State have proposed many bills to combat Homelessness. Washington State stands amongst the states with the highest homeless population. According to the Department of Commerce 2022 one night "Point in Time" count there are 25,452 individuals and children on the streets of this state. That is likely an undercount of homeless in this state. This is a 10% increase from 2020. Due to this increase, this becomes a societal issue with dire consequences, such as, but not limited to; the increase in criminal activity. This consequence alone beckons policy makers to find a resolve quickly. Most are individuals, mostly men (70%), the remaining population are families with children. They include people from every gender, racial and ethnic group. With the crisis worsening state legislatures and Gov. Jay Inslee has made affordable housing and homelessness centerpieces of the 2023 legislative session.

Our policy makers and decision-makers have implemented programs from increasing density in residential neighborhoods to funding more subsidized affordable housing to limiting how much landlords can raise rent each year. Gov. Jay Inslee would like to propose an additional \$4 billion bond measure towards housing and homeless services. There has been some progress in defeating homelessness. From 2007-2019 there was a 23% decrease in the homeless population in Washington State. Albeit progress it is a slow moving response. As the homeless population increases so do the risk factors for society with the increase of criminal activity. Society has to pay for the consequence of crime out of their own pockets. Not all of the homeless population is violent. There are a great many people that are homeless that just need a hand, an opportunity to thrive with help from these allocated funds from our government and constant support. There are able bodied people in the homeless sector that would love to work and there are plenty of opportunities out there for them to do so, if given a chance. This would be beneficial to our economy.

Rapid re- housing is an alternative intervention designed to quickly connect people to housing and services, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Rapid re-housing provides short term rental assistance and services. It's offered without preconditions (income, employment, absence of criminal record or sobriety) and the resources and services are normally tailored toward the person. I agree with this concept. Once being homeless myself, and now being a homeowner, I understand both sides of the coin. There is no place like home.

