



S. 1518/H.R. 7221 – Community Partnership to End Homelessness Act of 2007

FLOOR SITUATION

S. 1518 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) on May 24, 2007. The Senate is expected to consider the legislation on October 2, 2008.

S. 1518 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on October 2, 2008.

**Note: S. 1518 is identical to H.R. 7221 that was introduced by Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI), and referred to the Committee on Financial Services. S. 1518 and H.R. 7221 is similar to legislation (H.R. 840) that was introduced by the late Representative Julia Carson (D-IN) and Representative Geoff Davis (R-KY). The bill was reported from the Committee on Financial Services by voice vote on July 31, 2008, but has not been considered by the House.*

SUMMARY

Definition of Homelessness: The bill expands the definition of homelessness to include individuals or families who will lose their housing within fourteen days and individuals and families who are attempting to flee domestic violence or other dangerous or life-threatening situations. In addition, the definition includes homeless unaccompanied youth and families with children who have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing, persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period, and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of a variety of conditions.

Interagency Council on Homelessness: The bill requires the Council to coordinate the Federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership with government entities and the private sector to maximize the effectiveness of the Federal government in contributing to the end of homelessness. It also requires the Council to make available for public comment a National Strategic Plan to End Homelessness. The bill authorizes \$3 million for fiscal year 2009 for this Council and such sums for fiscal years 2010 through 2013.

Emergency Solutions Grants Program: The bill establishes this new grant program and authorizes the Secretary to make grants to States and local governments for the renovation or rehabilitation of buildings to be used as emergency shelters, to provide essential services related to emergency shelter or street outreach, to provide rental assistance, and housing relocation or stabilization services for homeless individuals. The bill expands the overall percentage of McKinney-Vento funds that can be used for homeless prevention to as much as 20 percent (currently it is 3 percent of funds).

Permanent Housing: This legislation designates 30 percent of total funds for new permanent housing for families and individuals with disabilities.

Continuum of Care Grants: The bill consolidates the Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care program, and the Moderate Rehabilitation/Single Room Occupancy program into a single Continuum of Care competitive grant program. The bill authorizes \$8 million for each of the fiscal years 2009-2013.

Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program: The bill establishes the Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program. This program would allow rural communities to have greater flexibility in using Homeless Assistance Grants. It also requires the GAO to conduct a study of homelessness and homeless assistance in rural communities.



Authorization Levels: The bill authorizes \$2.2 billion for fiscal year 2009 and such sums for fiscal year 2010.

BACKGROUND

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was signed into law by President Reagan on July 22, 1987. The legislation was an attempt to deal with the growing issue of homelessness in America. The legislation was championed by Representatives Stewart B. McKinney (R-CT) and Bruce Vento (D-MN). It encouraged people to work with the same courage, dignity, and determination exemplified by Reps. McKinney and Vento to eliminate homelessness in the United States.

McKinney-Vento homeless assistance grants for housing and other services are administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD distributes four homeless assistance grants, each of which provides funds to local communities to finance a range of housing and supportive services options for homeless persons. These four grants - the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) program, the Supportive Housing Program (SHP), the Shelter Plus Care (S+C) program, and the Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy Dwellings (SRO) program -- are authorized in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77). Congress appropriates one lump sum for all four grants, and HUD then determines how the funds are allocated among the four programs. Congress has not reauthorized or reformed the HUD McKinney-Vento program since 1994.

McKinney-Vento also is the primary piece of federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in U.S. public schools. It was reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002. The U.S. Department of Education administers the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program by issuing formula-based grants to states, supporting an office to administer the program, collecting data on homeless children, and reviewing state plans to address a range of issues involving the education of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youth also are served by other federal homeless programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Head Start Act, and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act .

A study conducted by the Urban Institute states that about 3.5 million people, which includes 1.35 million children experience homelessness each year. For the 2006-2007 school year, the U.S. Department of Education reported that 688,174 Kindergarten through 12th grade students were homeless. Recent statistics estimate that there are approximately 1.6 million unaccompanied or runaway youth that experience homelessness in the United States each year. In addition, about 63% of runaway and homeless children are never reported or sought after by their parents or guardian. Homeless adolescents often suffer from severe anxiety, depression, and poor health. Such youth also face difficulties attending schools, due to lack of residency, guardianship and proper documentation.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office has not issued an official cost estimate, however a preliminary estimate from CBO stated that the bill would have no effect on mandatory spending.

STAFF CONTACT

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