

UNHOUSED BILL OF RIGHTS

The first federal resolution to declare inalienable rights for unhoused persons and provide solutions to permanently end the crisis by 2025 was introduced in July of last year by Representative Cori Bush (D-MO). The House Resolution, H.RES. 568: The Unhoused Bill of Rights, calls for more funding for social programs and abolishing discriminatory policies and practices that exclude people from accessing services or exercising their rights based on housing status.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that Congress addresses this worsening crisis with permanent solutions much like those which this House Resolution entails including:

- Permanently ending the unhoused crisis by 2025 by drastically increasing affordable housing stock, providing universal housing vouchers, and bolstering funding to federal housing programs, shelters, transitional and permanent housing programs, social services and housing advocates.
- Repeal the Faircloth Amendment which limits the total number of affordable public housing units that can be built.
- Calling on the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to declare the unhoused crisis a public health emergency.
- Protect unhoused individuals from the violation of their fundamental civil and human rights to housing, healthcare, livable wages, education, employment opportunities, access to public facilities, and freedom from harassment by law enforcement, private businesses, property owners, and housed residents.
- Support historic federal funding levels for state and local governments to provide 24-hour support for unhoused people, including emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, supportive services, public restrooms, hand-washing stations, showers, laundry facilities, and water fountains in coordination with grassroots and community-led organizations.
- Develop holistic, health-based, and non-carceral solutions to the unhoused crisis in coordination with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), HHS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), community-led organizations, and unhoused advocates from a health-based approach that addresses both the unhoused and public health crises.

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The timing of the resolution comes as the country faces a looming yet entirely preventable crisis of widespread evictions, skyrocketing rents and home prices, and a lack of long-term policy solutions to prevent millions of people from being evicted from their homes.

It's a crisis long in the making but rarely spoken about as many Americans preferred to believe that homelessness was something that could never happen to them. But this issue now takes the forefront as the COVID -19 pandemic has exposed just how many of our neighbors and family members live one missed paycheck away from becoming unhoused.

Without long-term solutions like those proposed in the Unhoused Bill of Rights, tens of thousands of Americans could soon come face-to-face with the rampant harassment, woefully inadequate support, and overall traumatic experience that the millions of already homeless people currently face in a country that has a history of discriminating against its people on the basis of housing status.

Cosponsors:

Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [D-OR-3], Rep. Bowman, Jamaal [D-NY-16], Rep. Carson, Andre [D-IN-7], Rep. Clarke, Yvette D. [D-NY-9], Rep. Evans, Dwight [D-PA-3], Rep. Garcia, Jesus G. "Chuy" [D-IL-4], Rep. Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18], Rep. Jayapal, Pramila [D-WA-7], Rep. Jones, Mondaire [D-NY-17], Rep. McCollum, Betty [D-MN-4], Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria [D-NY-14], Rep. Pressley, Ayanna [D-MA-7], Rep. Tlaib, Rashida [D-MI-13], Rep. Velazquez, Nydia M. [D-NY-7], Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12], Rep. Williams, Nikema [D-GA-5], Rep. Schiff, Adam B. [D-CA-28], Del. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large], Rep. Lee, Barbara [D-CA-13], Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9], Rep. Meng, Grace [D-NY-6], Rep. Newman, Marie [D-IL-3], Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9], Rep. Lowenthal, Alan S. [D-CA-47], Rep. Bass, Karen [D-CA-37], Rep. McGovern, James P. [D-MA-2], Rep. Grijalva, Raúl M. [D-AZ-3], Rep. Lieu, Ted [D-CA-33], Rep. Levin, Andy [D-MI-9], Rep. DeSaulnier, Mark [D-CA-11]

About National Coalition for the Homeless

The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission: To end and prevent homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are respected and protected.

Contact NCH with questions: Donald Whitehead, Executive Director,
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