

Testimony of Congressman J. Luis Correa
In support of level-funding for the HUD-VASH Program
Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 10:28 A.M.

Rayburn 2358-A

- Thank you, Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Price, and Members of the Subcommittee for allowing me the opportunity to express my strong support towards robust funding for programs that provide assistance to homeless veterans.
- As a Member of the House Committee on Veteran Affairs, I urge this subcommittee to provide \$47 million for the Housing and Urban Development-Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing Program, commonly referred to as the HUD-VASH Program, for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, which is consistent with FY2017 funding levels.
- According to the most recent 2017 Annual Homeless Assistance Report issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), there were 553,742 people who were homeless across the United States, including an estimated 40,056 veterans.

- No veteran who has served his or her country honorably should be left homeless.
- As gatekeepers of taxpayer money and the promise we make to our young men and women of the military, it is our responsibility that all do well years later even after they return to the United States.
- The State of California alone in FY2017 had the highest number of homeless veterans in the United States – 11,472.
- Following California were the states of Florida and Texas, which are the second and third states with the highest levels of homeless veterans at 2,817 and 2,200 respectively.
- In 2017, my Congressional District had 405 homeless veterans, which is the second largest in the small city and county categories in the Continuums of Care for homelessness in the United States.

- As you know, the HUD-VASH Program is crucial to ensuring that veterans have the support they need to keep a roof over their head, and in some cases, their family's.
- Through public housing authorities, HUD provides rental assistance vouchers for privately owned housing to veterans who are eligible for VA health care services and are experiencing homelessness.
- In many instances, VA case managers connect these veterans with support services such as health care, mental health treatment and substance use counseling to help them in their recovery process and with their ability to maintain housing in the community.
- For instance, Ernie Maas served in the Navy for seven years during and after the Vietnam War. Unfortunately, many years after his service, he injured his back making it difficult to work. He lost his home and for two years, he was homeless and lived underneath a bridge on Four Mile Run in Virginia. HUD-VASH made it possible for him to find a home and was connected to VA health services.

- Another example of the importance of HUD-VASH was for an Oakland veteran by the name of Kevin, who became homeless at the age of 27. For two years, he attended college and lived out of his car. Through the help of the HUD-VASH program and supporting organizations, he was able to secure an apartment and now holds a bachelor's degree.
- Army Sergeant Oneika Loudon was homeless until she learned about the HUD-VASH program. The voucher she received allowed her and her children to find a home to live in. She stated that the program saved her life and her children's lives.
- There are thousands of stories like these that are made possible through this live-saving program.
- In 2015 alone, HUD provided more than 78,000 vouchers to help house veterans across the country.

- In FY2017, my congressional district was awarded close to 220 HUD-VASH vouchers.
- The State of California, and specifically Orange County, has one of the highest property rental prices in the United States, and HUD-VASH vouchers provide our veterans with the support they need to get back on their feet.
- Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak before the subcommittee and for your consideration of my request.