

June 14, 2023

Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Levin, I submit this statement for the record to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity's Legislative Hearing on behalf of Family & Community Services Inc., which has provided the following Grant and Per Diem services in Northeastern Ohio since 2008. Our organization currently operates 120 beds for homeless veterans and, since 2008, has placed over 75% of veterans exiting our program into permanent housing. In Summit County, we have achieved functional zero homeless veterans.

We thank you for your Committee's bipartisan work to enhance the per diem rate during the public health emergency. During the health emergency, our nightly per diem rate increased to \$164.67 per night from our pre-pandemic rate of \$54.89. This increase allowed us to continue to keep our doors open for veterans who would otherwise be on the street. Food, utilities, and staffing costs grew by over 100% during the pandemic. These are the bare minimum costs needed to care for homeless veterans.

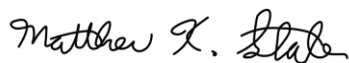
The recent decrease at the end of the PHE dropped our rate to \$64.52. This reduction has required us to look into cutting staffing and programming for the veterans and could lead to programs like ours having to close our doors. While the pandemic has been declared over, the cost of providing these same essential services to our veterans remains at the same level as during the pandemic. Our costs have increased, and our revenue has been cut. This formula will lead to programs shutting their doors and veterans becoming homeless. There is a high moral cost for failing to provide the basics of food and shelter to our veterans and a high fiscal cost. People on the street will end up in the most costly public systems, hospitals, and judicial systems. All the gains we have made in reducing the number of veterans experiencing homelessness will be lost.

We appreciate the intent of H.R. 3848 to restore section 4201 assistance, which has been critical, and to increase the per diem rate to 133%. However, having this ceiling on funding would still require us and programs like ours to close our doors.

We support access to reimbursement in H.R. 491 to allow us to keep the doors open of programs serving homeless veterans. This reimbursement rate will also help our program and others like ours restore services and supports that veterans we serve have earned and the level of services required to operate this grant successfully.

Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at [m Slater@fcsOhio.org](mailto:m Slater@fcsOhio.org) or 330-687-8136.

Sincerely,



Matthew Slater  
Director of Development  
Family & Community Services, Inc.