Access to Legal Services for HOMELESS VETERANS

Unresolved Legal Problems Contribute to Veteran Homelessness

- Many unresolved legal problems disqualify veterans from the programs, benefits, services, and treatment they need to regain self-sufficiency.
- More homeless veterans are unsheltered today than two years ago.

GETTING HELP

- Many legal issues that arise and accumulate while living on the street prevent veterans from accessing the programs, benefits, and services they need.
- A loss of a driver’s license leaves veterans without photo identification needed to access Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services, and unpaid trespass citations result in bench warrants, which disqualify those veterans from housing and jobs programs.
- The VA conducts an annual survey called CHALENG that continually finds half of the top ten unmet needs of homeless veterans are legal problems.

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Legislation that will not increase federal spending, such as the Homeless Veterans Prevention Act, and the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act, have broad bipartisan support.

Both bills would allow the VA Secretary only to use existing appropriations to fund legal services for homeless veterans through private-public partnerships.

Both bills are supported by veteran service organizations, the legal community, and the VA.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

✓ Veterans who already are living on the street or in crowded shelters are at increased risk of contracting the virus and failing to get the medical help necessary to recover and prevent its spread.

THE POINT

THE PROBLEM
Annual surveys by the VA reveal that at least half of the top ten unmet needs of homeless veterans are unresolved legal problems.

THE SOLUTION
The VA needs the statutory authority to use existing appropriations to fund legal services for homeless veterans through public-private partnerships.

THE ASK
Senators, please support bringing S. 980 to the floor, particularly the language of Section 3 concerning legal services for homeless veterans and vote to pass the bill. Representatives, thank you for passing H.R. 3749.