

MOTION

Homelessness is a tremendous crisis for Los Angeles, reaching into nearly every neighborhood and demographic of our city. Tens of thousands of people sleep on our streets, and hundreds of them die there each year.

Over the past several years, government and philanthropic organizations have created an array of new programs, hired staff, begun to build and open new facilities, and invested billions of dollars to address this crisis. At meetings of the City Council and its various committees, we routinely hear about our programs and policies from government officials, non-profit executives, business associations, neighborhood councils, homeowners, developers, and activists from a variety of organizations and perspectives.

One voice, however, has been largely missing: the voice of people who are homeless, or have recently been homeless. As a result, elected officials and policymakers only rarely hear when programs fail to work as advertised, when resources and staff are misaligned, how new ordinances impact people who are homeless, or how sexism, homophobia, and institutional racism impact services.

The lack of a regular, consistent and prominent platform for the voices of people who are or have been homeless inevitably bakes stigma, stereotype, and paternalism into the legislative and administrative process. It leads to misinformed policy-making, faulty program development, and poor budgeting decisions. It impairs efforts to reduce or end homelessness, and, as a result, causes harm to people who are homelessness. We set ourselves up for failure if we fail to take into account the experience of people who have been homeless. Programs that sound good on paper or in a City Council meeting may not work given the complexities of being without housing.

To broaden their perspective on important policy issues, and to increase the voices of constituencies into decision-making that impacts them, City officials have created standing commissions and advisory councils, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Disability, the Commission on Community and Family Services, the Native American Indian Commission, and the Transgender Advisory Council. It is both necessary and beneficial to do the same for the issue of homelessness, creating a Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness, composed entirely of people who are currently, or have been in the recent past, homeless in Los Angeles.

To be effective, such a commission would need to be properly resourced and funded, be representative of the diversity of the city's homelessness population, and reflect the demographics of the city's homelessness population.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, with the assistance of other departments of agencies as appropriate, make recommendations to the City Council on the most effective

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way to establish a Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness, composed entirely of people who are currently, or have been in the recent past, homeless in Los Angeles.

I FURTHER MOVE that the recommendations include the following considerations:

- The size of the commission, length of terms of service, and the appointing authority.
- Potential changes to ordinances, administrative code, and/or City Council rules to form the commission, and to insure that it can have reports heard and considered by the City, and that its members can be granted time to speak on legislative and budgetary matters impacting homelessness.
- Requirements to represent different segments of the diverse homeless population in Los Angeles, including people with different levels of acuity, length of time homeless, experience with economic hardship, substance abuse, domestic violence, or mental or physical disability, and other factors.
- Requirements to be reflective of the demographics of the city's homeless population, accounting for the dramatic over-representation of African-Americans in our homelessness population, and including proper representation for seniors, veterans, women, immigrants, youth, and transgender communities, among others.
- Appropriate funding and resources, including dedicated staff time, training, access to materials and technological resources, and stipends or honoraria for service.

I FURTHER MOVE that, in crafting recommendations, CLA consult with people who are or have been homeless in Los Angeles, with people who have served on "lived experience" advisory commissions in Austin, Texas, and Vancouver, Canada, and other jurisdictions, and with resources outlining best practices in forming advisory committees of lived experience.

Presented by 

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