



MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER

— DISTRICT 10 —

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Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas Furthers “Right to Housing” Initiative through Support for Federal Rental Assistance

On the heels of a successful vote by the City Council to develop a Right to Housing framework, Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas is pushing, in partnership with Councilmembers Raman, Cedillo and Koretz, to operationalize efforts to expand equitable access to long-term affordable housing across the City of Los Angeles with a newly adopted [motion to prioritize legislative advocacy to secure additional federal rental assistance resources and housing vouchers](#).

“As we work to abate the dual crises of homelessness and affordable housing across LA City, we must aggressively seek a new paradigm of federal support to effectively scale up our response,” said Councilmember Ridley-Thomas. “We are far from receiving a sufficient or equitable allocation of rental assistance to meet the need – and this motion is the first step in the right direction to combat housing insecurity at multiple levels.”

Research shows that there are approximately 41,000 people experiencing homelessness in the City of Los Angeles. A multi-city study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that with the support of rental assistance, the number of families living in shelters or on the street declined by three-fourths. However, rental housing subsidies allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development only provides sufficient vouchers and assistance to 1 out of 4 households nationally, but in Los Angeles, the

proportion of eligible households drops to 1 out of 10. Of note, President Biden's recommended budget proposes to increase the allocation of these critical resources.

"It is a well-known fact that homelessness is a pervasive issue in the city of Los Angeles," said HACLA CEO Doug Guthrie. "Even with vital programs like Project Homekey, of which we are very proud to be a part in partnership with the City, there are still not ample enough resources available for the Angelenos who need it most. This imperative motion calls for an increase in rental assistance resources, including more project based vouchers, to meet the needs of our unhoused neighbors and to see our combined efforts realized more effectively."

Although there have been significant resources dedicated toward the development of affordable and supportive housing, there is still much work to do. Last year, Governor Gavin Newsom initiated the Homekey Program that converted hotels and motels into interim and supportive housing, through which LA City acquired 20 properties. However, once these properties are purchased, there is still a need to pay for the operations and services, which can be funded through federal rental assistance payments.

"We've known for a long time that expanding access to housing vouchers cuts poverty and reduces racial disparities. This is especially true in Los Angeles, where housing costs are among the highest in the nation and just 10% of eligible households actually get their hands on a voucher. I am so glad to see the Los Angeles City Council taking steps toward ensuring guaranteed access to housing vouchers for all eligible families," said Dr. Va Lecia Adams Kellum, President & CEO at St. Joseph Center.

"The onus must be on government to establish a Right to Housing that scales up preemptive measures to prevent our most vulnerable residents from falling into homelessness and helping those that do. There is simply no way around a public subsidy to ensure the lowest income earners in our communities can afford to live under a roof – and we get that done through the expansion of rental assistance programs," said Councilmember Ridley-Thomas.

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