

Background Information – Proposed Motion by WRAC HOC for WRAC to Support and Request City Support for HR 8340 (Sherman)

Following recent disturbing news articles about discrimination in housing policy against homeless disabled Vets (in the LAT and other outlets), the WRAC Homelessness Committee (HOC) met on July 30, 2024, and heard a presentation by John Alford, Senior Policy Advisor to U.S. Representative Brad Sherman, about a bill introduced in Congress by the Congressman: House Resolution 8340 – the “Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act” (bill aimed at combating Veteran homelessness through requiring HUD to exclude VA disability benefits received by a Veteran from the income formula used to determine HUD eligibility).

For the bill’s language and information about its status in Congress, see:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8340>

For Congressman Sherman’s press release about the bill, see:

<https://sherman.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressman-sherman-introduces-housing-unhoused-disabled-veterans-act>

HR 8340 is a non-partisan bill and is also supported by Congressman Ted Lieu.

Mr. Alford advised that although the bill has strong support in Congress, it is unclear when or even if it may eventually move forward in the legislative process and/or be enacted. He explained to the HOC that the support of WRAC and of the City of Los Angeles would be important and very welcome.

Both Brentwood CC and Westside NC have separately passed motions supporting HR 8340 and requesting that the City support the bill.

Recently, we learned that HUD has made a significant change that helps in the process of obtaining housing for unhoused Vets -- in not counting disability benefits when issuing HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) vouchers* -- but as we’ve learned from Congressman Lieu’s District Rep. Janet Turner, the change (as provided for in HR 8340) still needs to be made to federal programs across the board.

*For more info. on HUD-VASH vouchers, see:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/vash.

Sadly, unhoused disabled Veterans are present on the streets throughout the Westside; this is a regional issue.

Jay Handal, WRAC HOC Chair

Chris Spitz, WRAC & HOC Vice-Chair

Prepared for the 8/19/24 WRAC Board meeting

UPDATE: At the 9/16/24 Board meeting, Congressman Sherman’s district rep Sean Regan advised that the Congressman would welcome and appreciate the support of WRAC and of the City of Los Angeles.