

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 19, 2017

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Chairman
Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling:

I am writing to renew my previous request from last Congress that the Financial Services Committee hold a field hearing in Los Angeles on the issue of homelessness. As you may know, Los Angeles City and County leaders have begun to collaborate on a renewed strategy for addressing this issue, including recently approved measures to provide local funding for both the production and preservation of housing for the homeless as well as the social services necessary to support these populations. Because of this surge in local investment in the Los Angeles region, this represents a unique opportunity for the Committee to fully examine how federal investment can best leverage and support the City and County's efforts to address the homelessness crisis, and provide Committee Members with an opportunity to learn from government officials as well as local homeless service providers about the tremendous challenges of addressing homelessness and the need for effective coordination across federal, state, and local governments. The Committee has already planned to hold a field hearing on housing issues in Chairman Duffy's district in Wisconsin. Given this precedent, the Committee should commit to hold additional field hearings in other regions of the country, including Los Angeles.

The 2017 Point in Time Count in Los Angeles County showed that there were 57,794 homeless persons on any given day of January 2017. This represents an increase of nearly 10,920 homeless persons since the 2016 Point in Time Count, or a 23 percent increase compared to 2016. While we have made some progress throughout the nation towards the goals of ending homelessness, areas like Los Angeles continue to struggle with significant increases in homelessness year after year, and federal funding has not increased to meet the growing need.

In the face of this growing challenge, both Los Angeles City and County have committed significant funding to combatting homelessness. Last year, Los Angeles City voters overwhelmingly passed a \$1.2 billion dollar bond measure to fund housing for homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless, and to fund facilities that provide mental health care, addiction treatment, and other services. And earlier this year Los Angeles County voters passed a quarter-cent sales tax that will raise approximately \$355 million dollars annually to fund the services necessary to ensure people receive the help they need in conjunction with a safe and decent roof over their heads. This local funding is a tremendous step in the right direction, but requires robust federal involvement in order to ensure that the impact of these funds do not fall short as a result of a lack of sufficient partnership at the federal level. For example, many of the planned permanent supportive housing units will depend upon federal rental subsidies and other federal programs to support the long-term financing and affordability of the developments.

Since the launch of *Opening Doors* in 2010 – the nation's first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness – we have made significant progress towards in reducing homelessness in

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America, particularly among veterans. But many communities like Los Angeles are continuing to struggle to make similar gains due to the many challenges that a number of communities across the country are facing, such as stagnant wages and rapidly rising rents. It is clear that Congress needs to learn more about these challenges and do more to help communities like Los Angeles address homelessness.

I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



MAXINE WATERS