

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

October 23, 2015

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Chairman
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling:

I am writing to request that the Financial Services Committee hold a field hearing in Los Angeles, CA, on the issue of homelessness. As you may know, the Los Angeles City Council has recently declared that homelessness has reached a “state of emergency,” and City and County leaders have begun to collaborate on a new strategy for addressing this issue. This field hearing should explore how the federal government can support the City and County’s efforts to address the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles, while providing Committee Members with an opportunity to learn from local homeless service providers about the tremendous challenges of addressing homelessness.

The 2015 Point in Time Count in Los Angeles County showed that there were 44,359 homeless persons on any given day of January 2015. This means there are 5,000 or 12 percent more homeless persons on the streets of Los Angeles in 2015 than there were in 2013. This startling increase in homelessness in Los Angeles stands in stark contrast to national trends on homelessness, which show that homelessness rates are declining nationwide. Since the launch of *Opening Doors* in 2010 – the nation’s first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness – two cities have eliminated veteran homelessness and, nationally, the rate of chronic homelessness has decreased by 21 percent. But due to the large gap between wages and rents in Los Angeles—the largest such gap of any other rental city—homelessness in Los Angeles remains stubbornly high. It is clear that Congress needs to learn more about these challenges and do more to help cities like Los Angeles address homelessness.

I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you on this important issue and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



MAXINE WATERS
Ranking Member