

Legislation Text

File #: 181022, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings on the state of veteran homelessness in Philadelphia and how to connect veterans to supportive services.

WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) approximately 11 percent of the adult homeless population are veterans and about 58,000 veterans are homeless on any given night-and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year; and

WHEREAS, Homeless veterans tend to be male (91 percent), single (98 percent), live in a city (76 percent), and have a mental and/or physical disability (54 percent). Black veterans are substantially overrepresented among homeless veterans, comprising 39 percent of the total homeless veteran population; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness - extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care - a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks; and

WHEREAS, About 1.4 million other veterans are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing; and

WHEREAS, Veterans often suffer from conditions that make it difficult to find and maintain gainful employment and pay for housing. Additionally, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, placing some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment; and

WHEREAS, Along with veterans who have mental health or substance abuse problems, veterans with few financial assets or who don't have family members they can turn to for support may find themselves on the street; and

WHEREAS, Because of veterans' military service, this population is at higher risk of experiencing traumatic brain injuries and PTSD, both of which have been found to be among the most substantial risk factors for homelessness; and

WHEREAS, While the VA has spent decades attempting to address veteran homelessness, it remains unclear how effective their programs have been to date, given the number of veterans living on the street; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has a moral responsibility to ensure that our veterans receive the care and benefits they have rightfully earned, and shape a welcoming home for them to return to; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Public Health and Human Services is authorized to hold hearings on the state of veteran homelessness in Philadelphia and how to connect veterans to supportive services.

