



Senate Bill 914

The HELP (“Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations”) Act

Bill Summary

SB 914 will reduce gender bias and disparities in outcomes in California’s response to homelessness by embedding a focus on domestic violence survivors and other vulnerable populations into local homelessness plans.

Existing Law

Existing law creates the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to identify resources, benefits, and services that can be accessed to prevent and end homelessness in California.

Background

Domestic violence is one of the leading drivers of homelessness for women. Nationally, 57% of unhoused women reported domestic violence was an immediate cause of their homelessness.¹ In California, 18% of unhoused individuals reported experiencing domestic violence according to the state’s Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) demographic data.² Many survivors of domestic violence flee a dangerous situation with few resources – sometimes, with only the clothes on their backs.³

Unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness are unhoused individuals without children or other dependents.⁴ Nationally, unaccompanied women comprise nearly one-in-three of all unhoused individuals.⁵ And according to the California Policy Lab, 80 percent of unsheltered, unaccompanied women cited trauma or abuse as the cause of their

homelessness. They also wait on average more than 10 years to access stable housing, a rate twice that of men.⁶

Despite making up a significant portion of the homeless population, our state’s homelessness response does not appropriately consider the needs of these groups. Due to confidentiality requirements for survivors of domestic violence, victim service providers are prohibited by federal law from entering client-level information into the federal Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or the state’s HDIS. As a result, data about the number of survivors served, their needs, and program outcomes are not considered when measuring local responses to homelessness.

Details of the Bill

SB 914 will improve California’s response to homelessness by requiring cities, counties, and continuums of care that receive state funding to address homelessness to include domestic violence survivors and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific system supports are developed. The bill also requires the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to set and measure progress towards goals to prevent and end homelessness for these vulnerable populations.

Support

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (*Co-Sponsor*)

Downtown Women’s Center (*Co-Sponsor*)

¹ [California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Fact Sheet](#)

² <https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>

³ <https://laist.com/news/housing-homelessness/how-domestic-violence-became-the-no-1-cause-of-homelessness-for-women-in-los-angeles>

⁴ [USICH, "Expanding the Toolbox: The Whole-of-Government Response to Homelessness," October 2020](#)

⁵ [The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report – Part 1," January 2021](#)

⁶ [California Policy Lab, "Health Conditions Among Unsheltered Adults in the U.S.," October 2019](#)



Support (continued)

Rainbow Services (*Co-Sponsor*)
American Association of Doctors of Behavioral Health
Brilliant Corners
California Rural Legal Assistance
Central City Association
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Futures Without Violence
Good Shepherd Center
Gray's Trauma-Informed Care Services Corp.
Harbor Community Health Centers
Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law
Haven Hills, Inc.
Homeless Health Care Los Angeles
Hub for Urban Initiatives
Imagine LA
Jenesse Center, Inc.
Little Hoover Commission
Little Tokyo Service Center
New Star Family Justice Center
Safe Place for Youth
Sojourn
The People Concern
United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Valley Oasis
Venice Community Housing
WISEPlace
Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter

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