

# REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

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DATE: September 15, 2015

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations & Neighborhoods Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso   
Chief Legislative Analyst

Assignment No: 15-08-0708  
Council File No: 15-0002-S95

SUBJECT: Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Bonin / Harris-Dawson) to include in the City's 2015-16 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act, which would provide supportive housing to veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs' West Los Angeles Campus.

## SUMMARY

The attached Resolution (Bonin / Harris-Dawson) states the following:

- The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has recently advised that veteran homelessness has risen six percent;
- There is a critical need for long-term supportive housing on the West Los Angeles Campus; and
- Proposed legislation would authorize leasing authority at the West Los Angeles Campus to provide services that benefit veterans.

The Resolution recommends support of the Homeless Veterans Leasing Act to permit the Department of Veterans' Affairs to work with local governments and nonprofits to provide housing and services for homeless and disadvantaged veterans at the West Los Angeles Campus.

## BACKGROUND

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a 387 acre West Los Angeles Campus. According to the Los Angeles Times, from the late 1880s through the 1960s the site housed the West Los Angeles Veterans Home. Since that time, the home has been closed and housing services are no longer provided to veterans. Furthermore, many of buildings have fallen into disrepair and the campus has been used for the following purposes: a hotel laundry; a parking lot for school buses, rental cars, and a golf tournament; and a wine tasting benefit. Also, on the grounds of the campus is the University of California, Los Angeles' Jackie Robinson baseball stadium and a pool and tennis courts for the private Brentwood School.

In January 2015, the VA settled a lawsuit brought against it by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), related to approved uses at the West Los Angeles Campus. In 2011, the ACLU sued the federal government, on behalf of veterans, claiming that the VA was misusing the campus and failing to care for veterans. In

2013, a federal judge's ruling, which was appealed, stated that the VA had mishandled its responsibilities by leasing land "totally divorced from the provision of healthcare." There are approximately 4,000 homeless veterans in Los Angeles County, the largest concentration in the country.

In August 2015, Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Representative Ted Lieu sent a letter to the Senate and House Veteran Affairs Committees, relative to establishing housing for homeless and disadvantaged veterans at the West Los Angeles VA Campus. The letter included the Homeless Veterans Leasing Act as an Attachment, which, Senators Feinstein and Boxer introduced in September.

The proposal would allow the VA to work with local governments and non-profits to enter into long-term lease agreements to provide supportive housing to veterans. The proposal includes the following provisions:

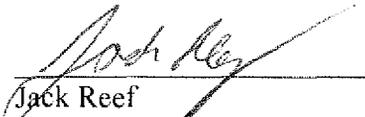
- Real property leases are for the purposes of providing supportive housing;
- Real property leases can be for a term not to exceed 50 years to a third party to provide services that principally benefit veterans and their families, as follows:
  - Promotion of health and wellness;
  - Education;
  - Vocational Training, skills building, or other training related to employment;
  - Peer activities, socialization, or physical recreation;
  - Assistance with legal issue and Federal benefits;
  - Volunteerism;
  - Family support services, including child care; and
  - Transportation.
- A real property lease can be for a term not to exceed 10 years to an institution of the State of California that has had a medical affiliation with the VA at the campus;
  - These leases must be consistent with the Master Plan (currently in development) and the activities of the institution must predominantly serve veterans;
- Land sharing agreements cannot be made unless it provides benefits to veterans;
- The land cannot be sold;
- Any lease must be consistent with the Master Plan;
- Advance notice of any lease must be provided to regional Congressional representatives; and
- The VA's Secretary and Inspector General must submit independent reports relative to leasing and land sharing agreements involving the site.

The VA advises that the proposal would enhance their ability to end veteran homelessness by partnering with the private sector and all levels of government to provide veterans the best care possible in a timely manner.

#### BILL STATUS

Homeless Veterans Leasing Act (Feinstein, Boxer)

09/09/15      Introduced. To Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

  
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Jack Reef  
Analyst

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the city of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal government body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Eric Garcetti has pledged to end veteran homelessness in the City of Los Angeles, and has overseen the housing of nearly 4,000 veterans to date; and

WHEREAS, despite significant progress, homelessness in Los Angeles persists, with a recent report by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority identifying a 6% rise in veteran homelessness; and

WHEREAS, a recent settlement by the Department of Veterans Affairs provides for the development of a Master Plan at their West Los Angeles Campus intended to advance veteran services in Southern California; and

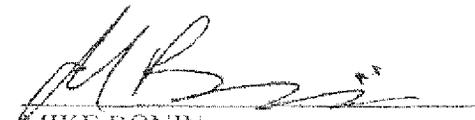
WHEREAS, there is a critical need for long-term supportive housing on the West Los Angeles Campus and enhanced use leases are necessary to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to work toward the goal of ending veteran homelessness in the City of Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, federal legislation proposed by United States Senator Dianne Feinstein would authorize leasing authority for the West Los Angeles Campus in order to bring in community partners to provide important services that benefit veterans and help make the campus a veteran-centric community setting; and

WHEREAS, this legislation would also permit the Department of Veterans Affairs to work with local governments and nonprofits to provide additional housing and services for homeless and disadvantaged veterans at the West Los Angeles Campus;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2015-16 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for Senator Dianne Feinstein's Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act of 2015.

PRESENTED BY:

  
MIKE BONIN  
Councilmember, 11<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:

  
AUG 19 2015