



March 5, 2024

HB 2723, Troy Anderson, City of Wichita, Before The House Welfare Committee

Homelessness is a pervasive and pressing issue that affects individuals and families across Kansas, creating a cycle of despair that is difficult to break. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated this crisis, leaving many vulnerable citizens without a safe and secure place to call home. As we strive for economic recovery, it is crucial that we prioritize the well-being of those who are most in need.

Our existing homeless shelters play a pivotal role in providing essential services such as emergency shelter, meals, medical care, and support services. However, the demand for these services far exceeds the current capacity of our shelters. Insufficient funding has led to overcrowded facilities and limited resources, making it challenging for these shelters to meet the growing needs of our homeless population.

By investing in our homeless shelters that focus on housing solutions with appropriate levels of supportive services, we can make significant strides towards breaking the cycle of homelessness and empowering individuals to rebuild their lives. Capital funding would allow shelters to expand their capacity, improve living conditions, and provide comprehensive support services such as mental health counseling, job training, and assistance with finding permanent housing.

Moreover, allocating additional resources to homeless shelters aligns with our shared values as a compassionate and caring community. It sends a powerful message that we are committed to addressing the root causes of homelessness and creating a society where every individual has the opportunity to lead a dignified life.

The City of Wichita is working to build the Multi-Agency Center (the MAC), a one-stop shop to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness, including short term congregate and non-congregate shelter, permanent housing units, and a cooperative space for social service agencies to provide wrap-around services. Conventional resources have been identified for the permanent housing units and federal HOME-ARP funds are a unique opportunity for the construction of non-congregate shelter units. However, funds are needed to build congregate shelter and the cooperative space for social services. The impact and success of this project is greatly hindered without these components.

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