

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1754

A RESOLUTION recognizing the Wichita Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team for its tremendous accomplishments and continuous efforts in reducing chronic homelessness in Wichita.

WHEREAS, As both Wichita's homeless population and the number of 911 calls relating to homelessness nearly doubled between 2009 and 2011, the Wichita Police Department was compelled to assume an active role in helping homeless individuals access services to obtain housing, employment, and other needs; and

WHEREAS, In fulfilling the Wichita Police Department's mission of "improving the quality of life" in the Wichita community, the department established the Homeless Outreach Team to address the city's issue of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Working alongside behavioral health and social service providers, the team bridges the gaps between homeless individuals and local service providers to increase access to transportation, shelter, substance-abuse treatment, case management, employment, and other needs; and

WHEREAS, The program has four full-time officers: Nathan Schwiethale, Matt Lowe, Chris Williams, and Ann Mackey. They are all supervised by Sergeant David Nienstedt, Lieutenant Drew Seiler, and Captain Wendell Nicholson. The team is a part of the Field Services division, overseen by Deputy Chief Anna Hatter, in the Wichita Police Department, directed by Chief Gordon Ramsay; and

WHEREAS, The Homeless Outreach Team runs and collaborates on many programs to aid homeless individuals. The team runs Finding a Way Home, which reunites homeless individuals with family members for stable housing. The team also collaborates with the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County to help individuals enter the Housing First program; and

WHEREAS, Since 2013, the team has experienced resounding success, as they have helped more than 1,000 people move into transitional housing, helped more than 600 people reunite with family members for support, helped more than 500 people find shelter, helped divert more than 700 non-victim crimes in lieu of services, and more than 3,000 times helped connect homeless individuals with services and providers; and

WHEREAS, The team has received national, state, and local recognition for its efforts, including awards from the Wichita Crime Commission, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Red Cross, and the Veterans Administration. The team was also recognized nationally for best practices by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we recognize the Wichita Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team for its tremendous accomplishments and continuous efforts in reducing chronic homelessness in Wichita; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate shall send eight enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Wagle.

Senate Resolution No. 1754 was sponsored by Senators Wagle, Faust-Goudeau, Kerschen, Masterson, McGinn, Petersen, Suellentrop and Ware.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.