

No. R-243. House concurrent resolution recognizing January 9, 2014 as Homeless Awareness Day at the State House.

(H.C.R.178)

Offered by: Representatives Head of South Burlington, French of Randolph, Haas of Rochester, Heath of Westford, Moran of Wardsboro, O'Brien of Richmond, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Pugh of South Burlington, Stevens of Waterbury, Vowinkel of Hartford, Weed of Enosburgh, and Wizowaty of Burlington

Whereas, homelessness has been a persistent and growing problem nationally, and in Vermont, for over 30 years, and

Whereas, Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies reports that between 2001 and 2011, the number of renters with very low incomes surged nationally from three to 11.8 million, while the share of renters paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing jumped from 38 to 50 percent, and

Whereas, the National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that about one-half of the homeless work, and

Whereas, HUD Secretary Donovan recently stated, "We are in the midst of the worst rental affordability crisis that this country has known," and

Whereas, Vermont has already lost 774 Section 8 vouchers due to sequestration and other federal cutbacks, and may lose more, and

Whereas, HUD reported that the number of homeless Vermonters on a single day in January rose from 1,160 to 1,454, with a corresponding 43 percent increase in homeless families; the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) documented 4,285 persons sheltered during FY 2013, of which 816 were children, and these increases were among the nation's highest, and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Education reports that from 2010 to FY 2012, the number of homeless students enrolled in Vermont schools increased from 785 to 1,202, and

Whereas, OEO reports, in FY 2013, the average length of stay in the State's shelters was 30.7 days, more than twice as high as the 15.2 days in 2002, and

Whereas, unequal treatment based on housing status remains a barrier for finding housing, employment, voting, and receiving services, and

Whereas, homelessness has a disproportionate impact on those who have experienced domestic violence, LGBTQ persons, people with disabilities, people living with mental illness, and persons of color, and

Whereas, individuals who are homeless are more likely to be robbed, physically attacked, or sexually assaulted, and

Whereas, to emphasize the urgency of these problems, today is Homelessness Awareness Day at the State House, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes January 9, 2014 as Homeless Awareness Day at the State House, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition.