

No. R-262. House concurrent resolution designating Wednesday, January 10, 2018, as Homelessness Awareness Day at the State House.

(H.C.R.213)

Offered by: Representatives Head of South Burlington, Pugh of South Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, and Stevens of Waterbury

Whereas, being deprived of a permanent place to live is an indignity that far too many Vermont families, single adults, and youths continue to endure, and

Whereas, the severe early-life impediments homeless children encounter may result in long-term consequences, and

Whereas, homeless singles often struggle with physical and mental health challenges, as well as substance abuse, and

Whereas, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count Report, 1,225 Vermonters were homeless on a single day in January, an increase of 123, or 11 percent, over 2016; of these persons, 306, or 25 percent, were children; 267, or 22 percent, were victims of domestic violence; 127, or 10 percent, were chronically homeless; 340, or 28 percent, had severe mental health problems; 228, or 19 percent, had a substance abuse disorder; 142, or over 11 percent, were youths 18–24 years of age; and 94, or 8 percent, were veterans, and

Whereas, despite the 11 percent statewide increase in the number of homeless Vermonters, some regions experienced solid progress, including 12 and 17 percent decreases respectively in Chittenden and Franklin Counties, and

Whereas, another encouraging indicator was the steady decline, since peaking in 2013, of homelessness among the State's veterans, testimony to the efforts of veterans' service providers across Vermont, and

Whereas, the Vermont Housing Opportunity Grant Program's Annual Report for fiscal year 2017 documented that the average length of stay in publicly funded shelters was 44 days, the longest in 15 years, indicating that significant barriers, including rental affordability and availability, prevent persons residing in emergency settings to relocate into long-term housing, and

Whereas, the continued degree of homelessness, especially among children, domestic violence survivors, youths, persons with disabilities, and those who are chronically homeless, remains a public policy concern of great importance, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly, while recognizing that much work remains to be done, applauds the progress of Vermont's housing and homeless service organizations in addressing homelessness and designates January 10, 2018 as Homelessness 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, to the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, and to the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition.