



NEWS RELEASE

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America’s Bipartisan Mayors Unanimously Urge Congress to Declare Access to Mental Health Services, Homeless Services as America’s Top Domestic Priorities

EVERETT, WA – This week, the U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously approved a [resolution](#) urging the U.S. Congress and the Administration to declare America’s mental health and homelessness emergencies as America’s top domestic priorities and focus resources toward solving them at the scale they demand. The resolution was spearheaded by the Mayors & CEOs for U.S. Housing Investment coalition, of which Everett Mayor Cassie Franklin is a proud member, and was co-sponsored by bipartisan mayors from across the country.

“There is an ongoing crisis on our streets, in Everett and across the country; there are so many people struggling with severe, untreated mental health conditions as well as individuals living unsheltered for a variety of reasons. Our cities want and need to do more, but we need support from upper levels of government to ensure we have the resources to do so,” said Mayor Franklin.

In the resolution, the mayors noted that, in the 1980s and 1990s, when state mental illness institutions closed down with an expectation that patients would receive services in community settings, funding for mental health care never materialized. Now thirty years later, the National Institute of Mental Health estimated that in 2021, one in five adults in the United States lived with mental illness, representing a national emergency.

Similarly, the mayors argue in the resolution, in the 1980s, federal government funding cuts contributed to cascading public housing problems that continue today, with housing authorities facing an estimated \$26 billion backlog in capital needs and the lowest levels of funding since the 1980s. Forty years later, millions of Americans are housing insecure or homeless in 2023, representing a national emergency.

Other problems amplify the twin crises, including that the Federal Reserve's most recent Survey of Household Economics and Decision-making, released in May 2022, found that about one-third of middle-class American adults could not pay cash to settle a \$400 surprise expense, while 11 percent of adults could not pay the expense by any method.

The Federal Reserve also found that the share of renters who had been behind on their rent in the prior 12 months was higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Addressing mental health and homelessness in our country is too important to delay,” said the coalition’s co-chairman, Mayor John Giles of Mesa, Ariz. “To open a bank account, apply for a job or car loan, and vote, proof of a non-temporary residence is required. Attainable housing and access to affordable mental healthcare are key to achieving financial stability and participating more fully in the American dream.”

“America’s bipartisan mayors are working at the frontlines of the nation’s mental health, housing and homelessness crises and see addressing them as top priorities,” co-chair Mayor Darrell Steinberg of Sacramento, Calif. added. “This resolution’s unanimous approval is a clear message for the Congress and the Administration to declare America’s mental health and homelessness emergencies as America’s top domestic priorities and focus resources toward solving them at the scale they demand.”

Coalition member and CEO of Pallet Shelter Amy King added that “with continuing workforce shortages, the businesses community at large needs to recruit and retain a more robust and diverse workforce. This requires access to affordable housing and health care resources, including mental health care. At Pallet, we provide living wage jobs to people experiencing homelessness and impacted by the justice system. Through their lived expertise, we know both affordability of and access to housing and services are a critical component in successful reintegration.”

Mayors & CEOs for U.S. Housing Investment is 44 bipartisan mayors & businesses representing more than 23 million residents & millions of households wanting stronger federal affordable housing investment. Visit www.housinginvestment.org or follow @mayorsandceos on social media for more details.

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