

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 582

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that children have a right to adequate housing.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 25, 2009

Ms. WATERS submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that children have a right to adequate housing.

Whereas the House of Representatives is concerned about the depth of the economic recession and the growing number of homeless families and youth;

Whereas children who are without adequate housing may be placed in unsafe and hazardous environments;

Whereas the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has estimated that 28 percent of homeless families are unsheltered due to the lack of affordable housing and emergency shelter for families in communities throughout the United States;

Whereas the gap between the availability of affordable housing and emergency shelter and family need jeopardizes the safety and well-being of homeless children;

Whereas in the most recent one-night count of homelessness by the Urban Institute, nearly 200,000 children in families were homeless, with hundreds of thousands more children experiencing at least one night of homelessness over the course of a year, and millions more children living in substandard, overcrowded, or other precarious situations, placing such children at heightened risk of illness, serious injury, hunger, and educational delay;

Whereas approximately 2,000,000 unaccompanied youth experience at least one night of homelessness over the course of a year;

Whereas providing stable housing to homeless families dramatically improves family reunification as, according to the Family Unification Program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 94 percent of homeless families that were provided stable housing for 12 months were reunified, compared to 70 percent of homeless families who were not provided such stable housing;

Whereas providing stable housing to homeless families improves family preservation as, according to the Family Unification Program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 90 percent of homeless families that were provided stable housing for 12 months remained intact, compared to 65 percent of homeless families who were not provided such stable housing;

Whereas Congress has asserted a commitment to protecting children from neglect and abuse by authorizing and appropriating funds for the Child Abuse Prevention and

Treatment Act, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997;

Whereas children are not only homeless within a family unit, but also as unaccompanied youth;

Whereas many homeless unaccompanied youth experience child abuse, neglect, or both;

Whereas many homeless unaccompanied youth avoid shelters and other services because they fear being taken into the foster care system;

Whereas each year approximately 24,000 youth turn 18 or 21 and consequently “age out” of foster care, often lacking the financial, social, and personal resources to live independently;

Whereas in 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt declared that the United States had adopted a “second Bill of Rights,” including the right to a decent home;

Whereas the United States signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, recognizing housing as a human right;

Whereas the United States signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1977 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995 and, although the United States has not yet ratified such treaties, it is committed to uphold the object and purpose of such treaties, including the right of children to adequate housing; and

Whereas the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, signed by the United States in 1996, recognizes the right to adequate housing and the particular needs of children

and youth for safe, healthy, and secure living conditions:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) children and youth have a right to adequate
4 housing;

5 (2) homelessness poses significant harm and
6 costs to children and youth in the United States;

7 (3) there are an unacceptably large number of
8 children and youth in the United States who experi-
9 ence homelessness every year, often due to the lack
10 of affordable housing for their families;

11 (4) projects that provide services to parents and
12 other caretakers to prevent possible homelessness of
13 youth in crisis should be created and maintained;

14 (5) programs at the Federal, State, and local
15 levels that address the housing needs of low-income
16 families should be developed and implemented; and

17 (6) whenever it is in their best interests, chil-
18 dren have a right to be housed with their families.

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