

Governor Newsom signs Legislation to expedite housing services for homeless veterans

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This past week, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 1386, by Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D - Encino), which will cut down on bureaucratic red tape and create an expedited process to move homeless veterans into supportive housing units as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Under current law, many homeless veterans are deemed ineligible for supportive housing services because they receive service-connected benefits that place them just outside of restrictive eligibility criteria.

As a result supportive housing units built specifically for homeless veterans can remain vacant for months at a time, while homeless veterans sleep in tents on nearby streets. AB 1386 would address this challenge by providing increased flexibility and an expedited process so that supportive housing providers can quickly and efficiently move homeless veterans into available beds.

“It’s unacceptable – and frankly infuriating – that we have homeless veterans sleeping on our streets while units built specifically for them remain empty,” said Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel. “We’ve built these

units at great cost to taxpayers because we have a sacred obligation to care for those who have bravely served our nation in uniform, often enduring lasting physical and emotional scars.

We owe it to these veterans – and to taxpayers and residents – to ensure that we are cutting down on red tape and moving our homeless veterans into housing as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

"We should be judged as a society by how we treat those who have risked their lives in order to serve our country," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. "It is outrageous that some of our unhoused veterans can't come inside because of financial VA benefits they receive while beds go unused every single day.

This is not the time for bureaucratic red tape – this is the time for action. Thank you Assemblymember Gabriel for your urgency and leadership to get AB 1386 across the finish line."

"Increasing flexibility for certain eligibility requirements will allow currently vacant beds to be matched with Veterans who need these services," said Charles Helget, Executive Director of the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CAVSA) "This legislation is critical in addressing the needs and obstacles of Veterans. For these reasons, CAVSA is in strong support of AB 1386 and applauds Assemblymember Gabriel's efforts to promote equity and access in housing for Veterans experiencing homelessness."

High vacancy rates for veterans' supportive housing units have become a particularly acute problem in Los Angeles County, which is home to nearly 10% of all homeless veterans in the nation. AB 1386 is supported by a broad coalition that includes Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Agency, the City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County.

Jesse Gabriel proudly represents the San Fernando Valley in the California State Legislature.