

Letter: Homelessness is not just a local issue; it's a national crisis

June 7, 2024



The recent report indicating that 653,100 Americans are experiencing homelessness is a stark reminder of the Federal Government's alarming neglect of this crisis. This includes vulnerable populations such as veterans, at-risk youths, and individuals with disabilities or mental illnesses. The 12% increase in homelessness from 2022 to 2023 is unacceptable and highlights the urgent need for comprehensive legislative action at the federal level.

Our veterans, who have served our country with honor, deserve better than to be left without a roof over their heads. The increase in homelessness among at-risk youths jeopardizes their future and perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Moreover, individuals with disabilities and mental illnesses are particularly susceptible to the dire consequences of homelessness, lacking the necessary support systems to stabilize their lives.

The federal response so far has been woefully inadequate. The expiration of pandemic-era relief measures, like the eviction moratorium and emergency rental assistance, has exacerbated the situation. Without a sustained commitment to affordable housing and supportive services, these temporary fixes are merely a band-aid on a gaping wound.

We need real legislative action now. The government must prioritize expanding affordable housing, increasing funding for mental health and addiction services, and providing targeted support for veterans and

at-risk youths. Initiatives like permanent supportive housing have proven effective and should be scaled up nationally.

Homelessness is not just a local issue; it is a national crisis that demands federal intervention. The time for rhetoric is over; it is time for meaningful, sustained action. Only then can we hope to address the root causes of homelessness and provide all Americans with the security and dignity they deserve.

Sincerely,

Terry Dean Brooks