



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors

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June 10, 2024

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 8340, the Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act – SUPPORT

Dear Congressman Panetta:

On behalf of the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our support for the Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act (H.R. 8340), which would exclude U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Disability Compensation and Pension benefits from the adjusted gross income used to determine eligibility for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sponsored housing assistance programs.

Under current HUD guidelines, a veteran's service-connected disability compensation payments are included in the income determination towards eligibility for a housing voucher (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH), Section-8, Housing Choice). Depending on the area median income (AMI) and the local Public Housing Authority (PHA), veterans receiving VA disability compensation can find themselves having to choose between filing for a new/increased VA disability benefit or becoming ineligible for housing assistance due to the new/increased disability compensation. We find it a grave injustice that veterans have lost housing voucher eligibility due to their service-connected disability payments.

As you know, each PHA can set its own AMI through a local Administrative Plan. In the past, the Housing Authority of the County of Monterey (HACM) AMI limit was 50%, making a 80% or greater service-connected veteran ineligible for a voucher by virtue of being over income. Neighboring Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties PHAs had higher AMIs and offered income exemptions for disabled individuals/households which allowed 100% of veterans to be eligible for a voucher. However, as a result of the Interim Director and County Veteran Services Officer's efforts, the HACM Board approved an 80% AMI limit thus allowing 100% service-connected disabled veterans to qualify for a Housing Choice/Section 8/VASH voucher in Monterey County.

The HAMC Administrative Plan now states that *"Admission of Low-Income Families (up to 80% median household income) may be admitted to the program if they are working families (defined as a family in which the head, spouse or sole member is employed). In addition, low-income families in which the head and spouse or sole member is age 62 or over or is a person with disabilities may be admitted under this section. Such low-income families will not be admitted ahead of non-low-income families but will be placed on the waiting list according to the date of their application."*

H.R. 8340 would amend the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 to exclude VA disability compensation benefits from the definition of adjusted income, thus requiring local PHAs to similarly amend their Administrative Plans and stop the discrimination against veterans receiving VA disability compensation. The County of Monterey Board of Supervisors supports all federal efforts to better meet the needs of homeless veterans and is pleased to support this legislation.



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We appreciate your continued support for Monterey County, and we thank you for co-sponsoring H.R. 8340, the Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Glenn Church, Chair
Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, 18th Congressional District
 The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator for California
 The Honorable Laphonza Butler, U.S. Senator for California