

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: S. 923, Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am writing today on behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors to express our support for the Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act (S. 923). We greatly appreciate your sponsoring this important legislation.

S. 923 would authorize \$750 million in grants annually for five years to assist local governments in providing services to fight homelessness. The grants may be used for housing and services that assist homeless individuals provided the local government meets a 25% match requirement.

As you may know, Monterey County's homeless numbers are the highest they have been in a decade. According to the 2017 Monterey County Homeless Census & Survey Report, the number of homeless individuals has increased 27% and the number of homeless families has increased by 37% over the previous two year period. The survey revealed that 83% of the homeless were county residents before they became homeless, and 25% of the homeless are employed but homeless because they cannot afford rent. Even more alarming, according to a recent report from two education nonprofit organizations, over 7,000 students in the county are homeless, which represents nearly 10% of the student population. Twelve schools in the county have homeless rates of 20% or more, and over a third of the students at one elementary school in Salinas do not have stable housing.

The Board is acutely aware that the County's homeless problem has the potential to get worse if we do not invest in accessible housing solutions. Growing housing insecurity will only increase demand on our underfunded, over-stressed public services. The funding authorized by S. 923 would greatly assist the county in meeting the needs of our homeless population.

We are pleased to offer our support for the Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act, and we thank you again for your leadership on this important issue facing Monterey County and other communities across the nation.

Sincerely,

John M. Phillips
Chair, Board of Supervisors