

House Subcommittee to Vote on HR 32, Homeless Children and Youth Act

Background:

On Tuesday, February 7th, the House Financial Services Committee's Insurance, Housing, and Community Opportunity Subcommittee will vote on HR 32, the Homeless Children and Youth Act.

HR 32 is bi-partisan legislation that amends the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness to include children, youth, and their families who are verified as homeless by school district liaisons, Head Start programs, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs (RHYA), and early intervention programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C.

Recent regulations issued by HUD make it virtually impossible for most families and youth who are living in motels and paying for the motel room, or are sharing the housing of others because they have no where else to go, to qualify for HUD Homeless Assistance programs. These regulations require children and youth in such living situations to meet extremely burdensome requirements in order to be deemed "homeless" and therefore eligible for critical HUD programs. These families and youth are living in precarious, unstable, and very often unsafe living situations that are damaging to child and youth development. These living situations are considered homeless by other federal programs, including public schools, Head Start, RHYA, and Early Intervention programs. These federal programs recognize the urgent needs of children and youth, and the reality of child and youth homelessness. H.R. 32 would eliminate the new HUD regulatory burdens by creating a streamlined referral process so that vulnerable children and youth who are identified by these four federal programs are eligible for HUD-funded emergency and transitional housing, as well as critical support services.

Action Needed:

1. If your US Representative sits on the Insurance, Housing, and Community Opportunity Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee, please urge him or her to vote yes on HR 32 on Tuesday. A list of subcommittee member may be found at <http://financialservices.house.gov/Subcommittees/Issue/?IssueID=28421>
2. Regardless of whether your U.S. representative is on the subcommittee, please urge your U.S. Representative to sign on to H.R. 32. Contact information for U.S. Representatives may be found at <http://www.house.gov>.

Materials and Information:

1. A basic fact sheet on HR 32
2. A fact sheet responding, point-by-point, to misinformation about and arguments against HR32
3. A sample letter requesting co-sponsorship from your U.S. Representative
4. A summary of HUD's recently released regulations on its amended definition of homelessness. HUD and its proponents argue that the new regulations should be given a chance. HUD took more than two years to craft its regulations. The final regulations that it issued are so burdensome, and will prevent so many children and youth from accessing services, that legislative action is necessary. Vulnerable children and youth cannot wait any longer.
5. An analysis of testimony submitted by six child and youth witnesses who testified at the December 15, 2011 hearing on HR 32. The analysis demonstrates how these children and youth fall through the crack of HUD's statutory definition, and its newly issued regulations.
6. A list of national organizations endorsing HR 32.