

August 2, 2019

Supervisor Lisa Bartlett
County of Orange, 5th District
333 W. Santa Ana Blvd.
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Homelessness in Orange County

Dear Supervisor Bartlett:

As the elected Orange County Board Supervisor for the 5th District, you have an opportunity to take immediate action and make a positive impact in addressing the regional issue of homelessness in Orange County. Homelessness is an issue that affects every 5th District citizen, business owner, governmental agency, and elected official. As already experienced, there is no one solution to solving homelessness - it requires a holistic approach to address the systemic issues at the core of the problem.

In your role as Supervisor, you are elected to oversee the activities of the County's agencies and departments, and to help set policy on development, public improvements, and county services. Among those services is caring for the indigent; indeed, it is the County that holds the primary responsibility for that function under state law. Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 17000; *Tobe v. City of Santa Ana*, 892 P.2d 1145, 1165 n.18 (Cal. App. 1995) ("If the inability of . . . homeless persons . . . to afford housing accounts for their need to 'camp' on public property, their recourse lies not with the city, but with the county" to whom the legislature "allocate[ed] . . . responsibility to assist destitute persons."); *Clinton v. Cody*, No. H044030, 2019 WL 2004842, at *8 (Cal. Ct. App. May 7, 2019) ("[C]ounties, not cities, have a statutory obligation regarding housing for the indigent.").

A majority of these County services such as the Central Jail, Probation Department, Health Care Agency, and District Attorney's Office are in one location, but are servicing all of Orange County and its respective citizens. Homelessness is no different; it's a Countywide issue and the County needs to address it as such. In executing its responsibility to provide for the indigent, the County cannot discriminate on the basis of locality. Yet, the current Service Planning Areas (SPAs) arbitrarily formed by the County, have created unnecessary boundaries that have negatively impacted the delivery of services to Orange County's homeless population.


According to the 2019 Point in Time Final Report, there are nearly 500 vacant emergency shelter and transitional housing beds in the North and Central SPA's. The 2019 Point in Time Final Report also cited a population of 538 unsheltered homeless in the County's 5th District. Providing access to these beds to all homeless individuals in the County, irrespective of where they currently reside, would result in the largest positive step taken in addressing homelessness. Policy direction related to the SPA's arbitrary boundaries have prohibited these beds from being provided Countywide. It is truly incredible that nearly 500 shelter beds sit empty as a result of arbitrary, bureaucratic line-drawing, while homelessness continues to plague our Cities.

Please consider these points: by eliminating the SPAs and providing access to all County-funded, partially-funded and/or operated homeless shelter beds, you can positively impact the lives of 538 homeless and countless residents. As elected officials, we want to partner in solutions that ensure the safety, health and welfare of all our residents and our most vulnerable populations. We appreciate your consideration and we would like to schedule a meeting in next two weeks to further discuss and finalize next steps.


Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ross Chun". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

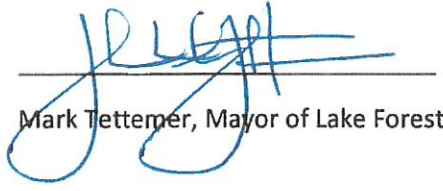
Ross Chun, Mayor of Aliso Viejo



Joseph L. Muller, Mayor of Dana Point

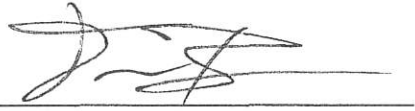


Don Sedgwick, Mayor of Laguna Hills

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Tetterer', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark Tetterer, Mayor of Lake Forest


Jerry Holloway, Mayor of Rancho Santa Margarita

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Bane', written over a horizontal line.

Dan Bane, Mayor Pro Tem of San Clemente



Brian L. Maryott, Mayor of San Juan Capistrano