



**COMMISSION ON SENIORS SUPPORT LETTER
20150909-003A**

Date: September 9, 2015
To: Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)
Subject: House Older Veterans

Motioned By: Commissioner Erica Garcia-Pittman
Seconded By: Commissioner Thomas McDowell

The Austin Commission on Seniors understands the gravity of the existing homelessness challenges within our region. We are acutely sensitive to this issue as it relates to our ageing, our veterans, and our disabled communities. The Commission enthusiastically supports the Mayor's Initiative to end Veteran Homelessness and house Austin's homeless veterans and their family members by November 11th.

At our monthly meeting, we heard from a representative from the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), Bree Williams, who reported that of the veterans experiencing homelessness, at least 45% are age 55 and over. This statistic is unacceptable.

This Commission also supports the critical work of ECHO to eliminate homelessness in the City of Austin and requests that particular attention be brought to older, homeless veterans living on the streets of Austin. To facilitate the process, it is recommended that rental barriers be examined and evaluated with members of the real estate community to provide more housing screening flexibility to help alleviate this challenge.

Lastly, there needs to be a high level of focus to support housing for homeless veterans on an ongoing basis.

Vote

For: Chair Dan Pruett, Vice-Chair David Gray, Commissioner Janee Briesemeister, Commissioner Erica Garcia-Pitman, Commissioner Martin Kareithi, Commissioner Mary Milam, Commissioner Thomas McDowell, Commissioner Jennifer Scott, and Commissioner Peter Varteressian

Against: None **Abstain:** None

Absent: Commissioner Ray Cabrera, Commissioner Joyce Lauck, and Commissioner Sally VanSickle

Attest: *Chair Dan Pruett*