

No. R-9. House concurrent resolution designating Thursday, January 5, 2017, as Homelessness Awareness Day at the State House.

(H.C.R.2)

Offered by: Representatives Head of South Burlington, Krowinski of Burlington, Pugh of South Burlington, and Stevens of Waterbury

Whereas, being deprived of a permanent place to live is an indignity that far too many Vermont families continue to endure, and

Whereas, the severe early-life impediments homeless children encounter may result in long-term consequences, and

Whereas, Children's HealthWatch found that children who were homeless either prenatally or as infants or toddlers were 41 percent more likely to have been hospitalized than children who were never homeless, and

Whereas, according to the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, homeless children are nine times more likely to repeat a grade, four times more likely to drop out of school, and three times more likely to be placed in special education classes than their housed peers, and

Whereas, both the financial and human costs of homelessness strain public services, including education and physical and mental health care, and

Whereas, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, on January 26, 2016, 1,117 Vermonters were homeless, and of those 281 were children, 227 were victims of domestic violence, and 124 were chronically homeless, and 20 percent of the counted households included children, and

Whereas, the Vermont Point-In-Time 2016 homeless count documented that 29 percent of those counted had severe mental health problems, 19 percent had a substance abuse disorder, and the number of veterans who are homeless decreased 23 percent from last year to 109 individuals statewide, and

Whereas, while the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Annual Homeless Assessment Report revealed a 27 percent decrease in total homelessness in Vermont since 2015, homelessness in Vermont has seen a 17 percent increase since 2008, and

Whereas, the Vermont Housing Opportunity Grant Program Report for fiscal year 2016 documented 4,143 persons sheltered over the course of the year, and the average length of stay was approximately 39 days, and

Whereas, homelessness, especially of children, remains a public policy concern of great importance, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly applauds the progress of Vermont's housing and homeless service providers in reducing homelessness and designates January 5, 2017 as Homelessness Awareness Day at the State House, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, to the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, and to the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition.