

**PRESS RELEASE
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STATE SENATOR SUSAN RUBIO INTRODUCES DWC-SPONSORED BILL TO DESIGNATE UNACCOMPANIED WOMEN AS AN OFFICIAL HOMELESS SUBPOPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

Earlier today, California State Senator and Assistant Majority Whip Susan Rubio (SD 22-Baldwin Park) formally introduced the historic “Unaccompanied Women Experiencing Homelessness Act of 2021,” that if enacted, will make California the first state in the nation to designate unaccompanied women – individuals without children or other dependents – as an official homeless subpopulation.

SB 678, sponsored by the Downtown Women’s Center (“DWC”), will require that counties provide data on unaccompanied women – who make up 29% of adult individuals experiencing homelessness nationally – to the Homeless and Coordinating Financing Council (“HCFC”). HCFC will be responsible for incorporating the data into the Homeless Data Integration System and for setting specific, measurable goals aimed at preventing and ending homelessness among unaccompanied women.

“Senator Rubio’s introduction of the “Unaccompanied Women Experiencing Homelessness Act of 2021” is a historic step toward ending homelessness amongst women in California,” said Amy Turk, C.E.O. of the Downtown Women’s Center. “Unaccompanied women, who are disproportionately victims of gender-based violence and who wait an average of 10-plus years to access stable housing, continue to fall through the cracks of our systems of care. The data, recommendations, and measurable goals that result from this legislation will uplift the voices of unaccompanied women, which have previously gone unheard.” In the fall of 2020, DWC’s advocacy efforts led to both the city and county of Los Angeles formally designating unaccompanied women as a recognized homeless subpopulation.

“Women who are on their own and experiencing homelessness are too often forgotten because there is a lack of specific programs to serve their needs,” said Senator Rubio. “Despite making up nearly one-third of homeless adults nationwide, no state, including California, classifies unaccompanied women as a distinct group. Many of these women are dealing with trauma, including domestic violence and sexual assault, that contributed to their situation. The first step to solving our state’s homeless problem is having accurate data about who is unhoused and what their needs are, and I’m proud to author this bill to accomplish that.”

The bill, co-authored by Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, Senator Maria Elena Durazo, and Senator Anna Caballero, carries endorsements from Los Angeles City Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Peace Over Violence, and a number of service providers working daily to support the needs of unhoused women.

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*The **Downtown Women's Center (DWC)** is the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless women. DWC envisions a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. Our mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy. For more information, visit www.DowntownWomensCenter.org.*