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State Senate Passes Sen. Rubio’s HELP Act, Targeting Homelessness Resources for Domestic Violence Survivors and Other Vulnerable Populations

SACRAMENTO, CA – In a unanimous and bipartisan vote today, the California State Senate passed a bill by Senator Susan Rubio (D-Baldwin Park) that targets help for domestic violence survivors, unaccompanied women, and transgendered individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Senate Bill 914 – The HELP (“Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations”) Act – would improve California’s response to homelessness by requiring cities, counties, and continuums of care that receive state funding to address homelessness to include domestic violence survivors and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific system supports are developed. The bill also requires the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to set and measure progress towards goals to prevent and end homelessness for these vulnerable populations.

“Unsheltered women and unsheltered transgender individuals report shockingly high numbers of domestic violence,” said Senator Rubio. “As our state and local governments continue to work toward ending the homeless crisis, we must make sure that we do not leave any part of the homeless population behind. Domestic violence services for individuals experiencing homelessness have been grossly underfunded, and the HELP Act is needed to help these vulnerable populations and focus on their unique needs.”

“We’re grateful to the Senate for recognizing the inextricable link between domestic violence and homelessness,” said Krista Colón, Public Policy Director for the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. “We are excited to see SB 914 move forward to its next hearing in Senate Housing. This important bill will ensure state and local governments will be one step closer to creating a gender-inclusive and intersectional homelessness system that will support survivors as they heal. This is one important element of the Partnership's economic justice work.”

“The Downtown Women’s Center applauds the Senate for voting unanimously to pass the HELP Act. This is an important step in addressing the longstanding gaps in our current homeless response system.” said Amy Turk, C.E.O. of the Downtown Women's Center. “As a co-sponsor of the bill, and the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness, we are grateful to Senator Rubio for raising awareness of the specific issues facing unaccompanied women and victims of domestic violence. DWC looks forward to this legislation becoming law and California becoming the national leader on combating women’s homelessness.”

“Rainbow Services is grateful for the overwhelming support of SB914,” Elizabeth Eastlund, Executive Director of Rainbow Services. “We look forward to the day when survivors and unaccompanied women are no longer left behind in any community plan to end homelessness, and we are proud to be co-sponsoring this groundbreaking legislation.”

Since joining the State Senate, Sen. Rubio has prioritized addressing the state’s affordable housing shortage and homelessness crisis. A member of the Senate Housing Production Working Group, she has authored several affordable housing bills over the past two years. In 2022, Sen. Rubio authored Senate Resolution 61 declaring the month of March 2022 as Unaccompanied Women Experiencing Homelessness Awareness Month in California. In 2019, Sen. Rubio authored SB 751 to create the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust for local communities to collaborate regionally and support affordable housing projects and homeless shelter programs.

Senator Susan Rubio represents Senate District 22. For more information, visit <https://sd22.senate.ca.gov/>