



WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND URBAN AFFAIRS

September 19, 2017

Council of the District of Columbia
DC Council Committee on Human Services
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 724-8000

Re: Homeless Services Reform Amendment Act of 2017

Dear Council Member,

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs urges you to vote NO on the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2017. This legislation will harm very low income families in our community by creating unnecessary and burdensome barriers to shelter and other services designed to prevent homelessness.

There is a crisis in safe, decent and affordable housing in the District. Families are being displaced, affordable housing is being eliminated and not replaced, and housing instability and homelessness are far too common. Now is not the time to limit services and supports for those in a housing crisis, which the Homeless Services Reform Act of 2017 will do by narrowing the definition of those eligible for housing, emergency rental assistance, and homeless services.

The District should invest more, not less in preventing homelessness and ensuring safe, decent, affordable and racially and economically integrated housing. The District's tax revenue and cash reserves are at the highest point that they have ever been since the beginning of Home Rule. Yet tens of thousands of District residents live in extreme poverty and face the loss of housing every day. The Homeless Services Reform Act of 2017 would take away the limited safety-net beneath their fall.

The District is a compassionate City. The proposed cuts in services are inconsistent with its values.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Smyth
Executive Director