



DPCC Staff Contacts:

March 9, 2011

Julie Klein (202) 224-7512

## **H.R. 1 Ends Housing Assistance Option for Nation's Homeless Veterans**

**H.R. 1, the House Republican spending plan for FY 2011, targets homeless veterans by eliminating funding for new HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers.** HUD-VASH vouchers are funded as a subset of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 8 program with services provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It is specifically designed to help homeless veterans secure safe and permanent housing, especially the chronically homeless. HUD-VASH is the nation's largest permanent supportive housing program for veterans. It has also been an important tool for serving female veterans, and those with families. Under the program, the VA determines veteran eligibility and then refers veterans to a local public housing authority for a HUD voucher. In addition to the housing voucher component, the VA provides supportive case management services to each voucher recipient, including assistance negotiating leases with landlords, help securing counseling, and assistance finding job training and education programs.

**The Senate Democratic alternative fully funds 10,000 new HUD-VASH vouchers, keeping the nation on the path towards fulfilling the President's mission to end veteran and chronic homelessness by 2015.** Since FY 2008, HUD-VASH has been level funded each year at \$75 million. Over the last three years, nearly 30,000 vouchers have been awarded to homeless veterans and Senate Democrats aim to bring the total up to 40,000 vouchers awarded by the end of FY 2011. However, HUD-VASH is now in jeopardy because House Republicans zeroed out funding for new vouchers in H.R. 1. HUD-VASH is a key component to ending homelessness among veterans in the next four years. Eliminating funding for this vital lifeline prevents thousands of veterans who bravely served our nation and protected our freedoms from the opportunity to access the support they need and rebuild their lives.

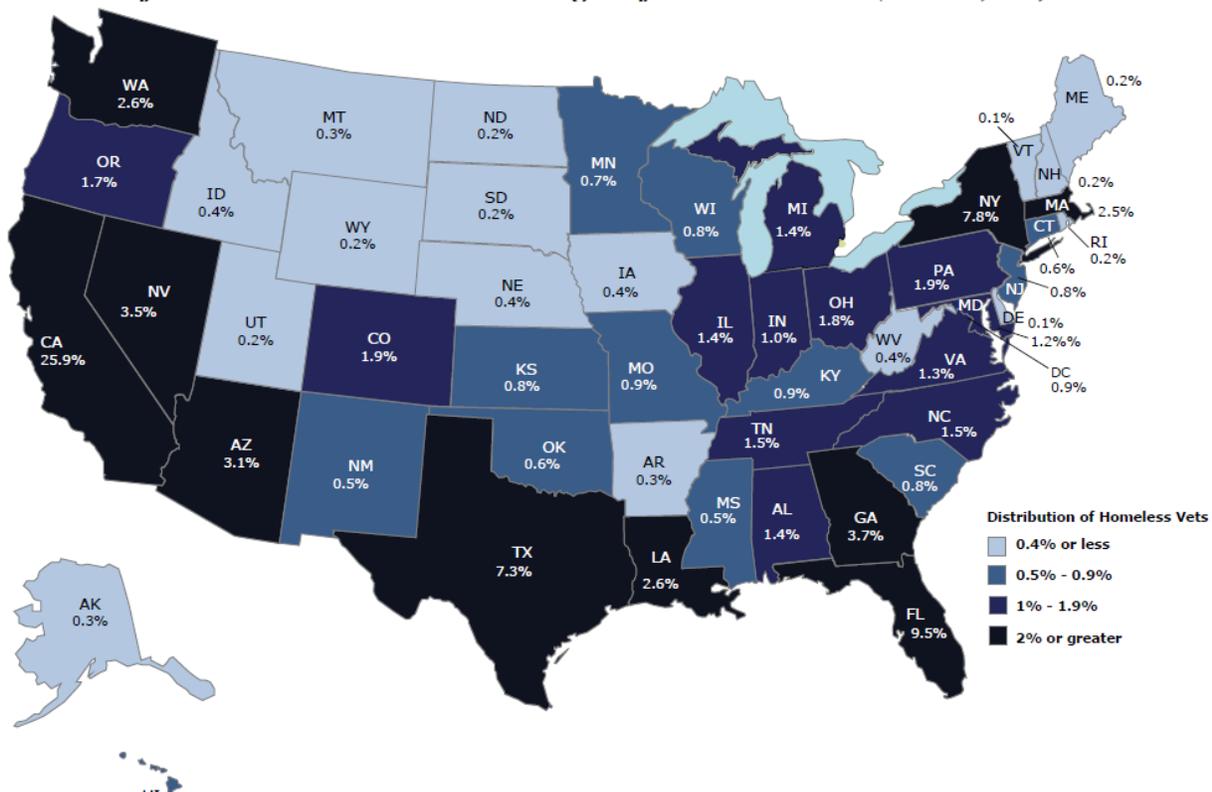
**Veterans are overrepresented in the homeless population.** For the first time ever, HUD and VA recently published an authoritative analysis of the extent and nature of homelessness among veterans. Although veterans comprise roughly 8% of the total U.S. population, they accounted for approximately 12% of all homeless persons counted nationwide during a 2009 point-in-time snapshot.

**On a given night in 2009, nearly 76,000 veterans were homeless while approximately 136,000 veterans spent at least one night in a shelter during that year.** According to the HUD-VA study, “During a 12 month period in 2009, an estimated 136,000 veterans – or about 1 in every 168 veterans – spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program.” Furthermore, “Low-income veterans are twice as likely to become homeless compared to all low-income adults.” [Veterans' Supplement to HUD's 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), released [2/11](#).]

**Lauded by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki as “By far, the most effective option for housing Veterans,” the HUD-VASH program has a proven track record of transitioning homeless veterans into stable, permanent housing.** Information compiled since the beginning of FY 2008 shows that veterans who received HUD-VASH vouchers had a lower risk of returning to homelessness than those who did not participate in the voucher program and instead only received intensive case management or standard VA assistance. The evaluation also shows that over the long-term, HUD-VASH recipients had both improved housing and improved substance abuse outcomes when compared to veterans who did not participate in the program. Studies have shown that providing people experiencing chronic homelessness with permanent supportive housing actually saves taxpayers money. [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness “Opening Doors” Announcement, [6/22/10](#); CRS Report RL34024, [11/4/10](#); [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#).]

**In the last three years, HUD-VASH has helped nearly 30,000 veterans by providing vouchers and assistance to help them get back on their feet and Senate Democrats are committed to continuing and fully funding this effective and successful initiative.** Without HUD-VASH vouchers, thousands of our nation's veterans will have one fewer tool to help them get off the streets and successfully rebuild their lives. Everyone deserves safe and stable housing, and HUD-VASH vouchers provide our nation's brave veterans with the opportunity to once again become self sufficient members of their community.

*Distribution of Homeless Veterans on the Night of the PIT Count (N = 75,609)*



*Share of the PIT Count of Homeless Persons that are Veterans*

