

MEETING WITH CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:
ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY IN BAY AREA
Justice Wurnitsch-Hogan

<p>Greatest Concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How big the issue is in the Bay Area: 7,000 homeless in San Francisco, 6,215 in Alameda County, of which 49% are in Oakland alone • In San Leandro, CA, 10,000 people out of the total population of 70,000 live in poverty, with high risk of homelessness • How public money is spent on addressing the issue, with concern that too many dollars go to removing homeless people from the streets rather than providing shelter and rehabilitation • Making sure we see the homeless as human beings, not just “the problem” <p>Article 25 of the UDHR, section 1: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.</p>
<p>How this issues affects the health of our community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we see no help from the government, people then go to a dehumanized position, only wanting to be rid of the problem, not caring about the humanity that is suffering. • Homeless people may not be getting any medical care, causing potential public health problems. • The conditions surrounding homeless people generate broader health problems, such as stepping on syringes and dealing with human waste.
<p>Possible actions to take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set priority as eliminating homelessness, rather than cleaning up with growing numbers of homeless people • Shift funding to help people prevent homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create more affordable housing ▪ Support community care of mentally ill people ▪ Fund adequate shelter, rather than focusing on clean-up efforts • Have more collaboration across Bay Area communities to address homelessness, rather than focusing only on a specific locality
<p>Positive results of actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better utilization of public funds for long term prevention of homelessness • Communities across the Bay Area collaborate to solve regional issue • Improved public health for everyone • Homelessness is minimized, and people in dire straits have opportunities to improve their lives rather than fall in greater despair.