

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2018

Acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave. NW
Washington D.C. 20420

Dear Acting Secretary O'Rourke:

We write to make you aware of a shortage of VA Caseworkers in Kern County, California. As a result, homeless veterans that have been allocated HUD-VASH vouchers are forced to remain in shelters or on the streets.

As you know, the HUD-VASH program relies on a partnership between the Department of Housing and Urban Development—which funds housing vouchers for veterans—and the VA—which provides the supportive services veterans need to thrive in their new housing environment. Congress has provided the VA with funding to ensure that veterans that receive a HUD-VASH voucher also receive case management, but due to staffing challenges these positions have gone unfilled.

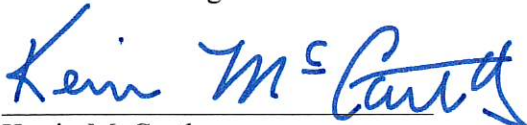
It is our understanding that the Kern County Housing Authority, which serves more than 8,000 square miles in California's Central Valley, has been allocated 143 HUD-VASH vouchers. 102 vouchers are currently being used by veterans, and we understand they are being well served by the VA's social workers and other case managers in the area. However, due to a shortage of VA staff, the remaining 41 vouchers cannot be distributed to homeless and at-risk veterans. This means 28 percent of all vouchers allocated to Kern County are left unused because of staffing problems. With at least 95 known homeless veterans in the county, 39 of whom are living on the street, the VA should drastically increase its efforts to provide the staffing required to ensure that these vouchers are put to use.

It is our sincere hope that you will work expeditiously to ensure that the VA provides ample staffing to ensure that the 41 HUD-VASH vouchers that have been allocated to Kern County can be used to house veterans in need. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



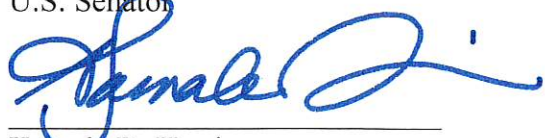
David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Kevin McCarthy
House Majority Leader



Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senator



Kamala D. Harris
U.S. Senator