

Testimony of
Coalition for the Homeless

on

Res. No. 1462

prepared for submission to

The New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare

by

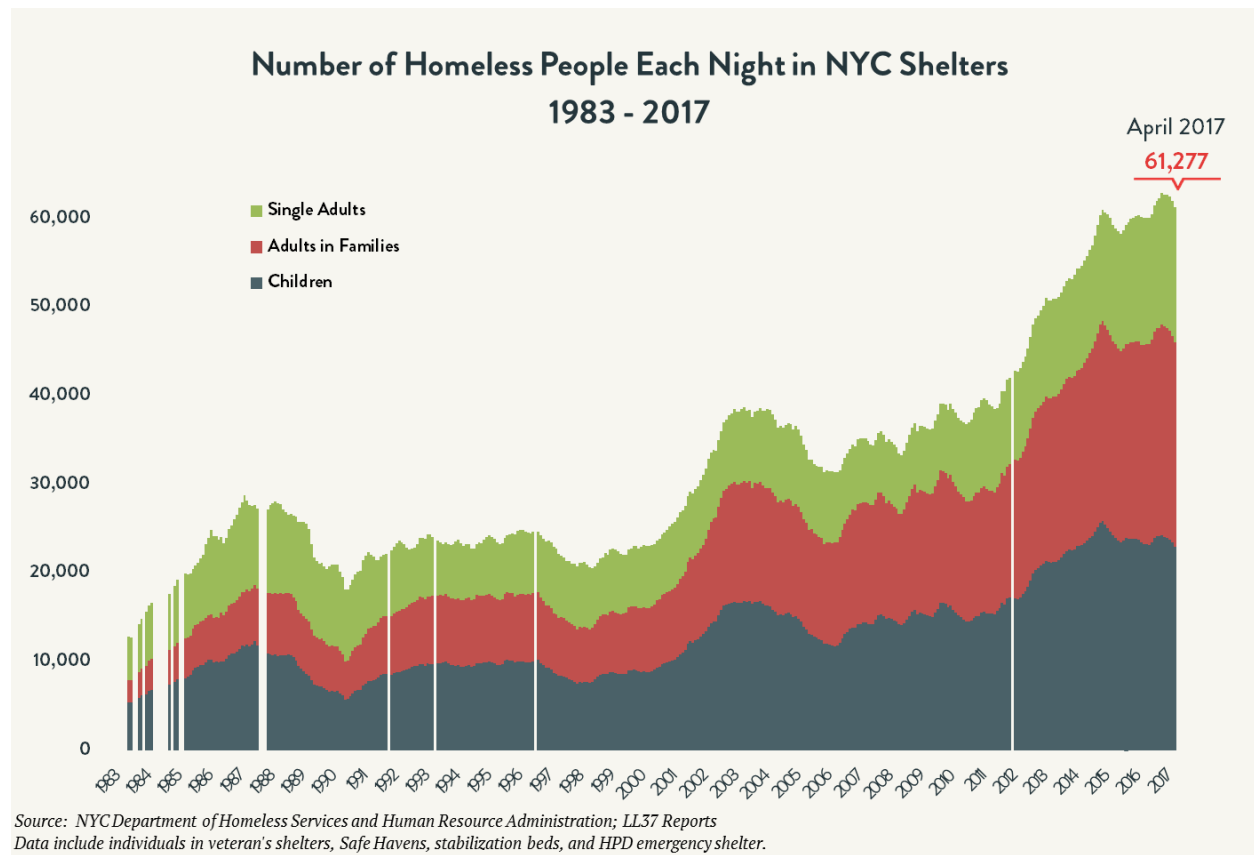
Giselle Routhier
Policy Director
Coalition for the Homeless

June 14, 2017

Coalition for the Homeless welcomes this opportunity to present testimony in support of Res. No. 1462 calling on New York State to create and fund Home Stability Support.

Near-Record Homelessness in New York City

New York City remains in the midst of the worst homelessness crisis since modern mass homelessness first emerged in our city roughly four decades ago. In April 2017, a near-record 61,277 men, women, and children slept in shelters each night – about 1,200 more than in April 2016. The number of children in shelters now is roughly double what it was in the years preceding the Great Recession.



Home Stability Support

The Coalition fully supports the creation of Home Stability Support and is proud to have been instrumental in its development. HSS would provide much-needed monetary assistance and supportive services to help prevent and end homelessness. It would do so by providing State- and Federally-funded rent supplements to households receiving public assistance who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to eviction, domestic violence, or hazardous living conditions. Current public assistance rental allowances are extremely and even unlawfully low. By providing additional rent supplements and help with finding and keeping apartments HSS would help families actually afford rents at market rates and remain stably housed. Once fully implemented, HSS is projected to reduce the number of people in shelters by 60 percent in New York City

alone. Enclosed is a full memorandum in support of New York State Assembly Bill A.8178, which would authorize the creation of Home Stability Support.

We thank the Council for the opportunity to testify and look forward to working together on our mutual goal of ending homelessness in New York City.

About Coalition for the Homeless

Coalition for the Homeless: Coalition for the Homeless, founded in 1981, is a not-for-profit advocacy and direct services organization that assists more than 3,500 homeless New Yorkers each day. The Coalition advocates for proven, cost-effective solutions to the crisis of modern homelessness, which is now in its fourth decade. The Coalition also protects the rights of homeless people through litigation involving the right to emergency shelter, the right to vote, and life-saving housing and services for homeless people living with mental illness and HIV/AIDS.

The Coalition operates 11 direct-services programs that offer vital services to homeless, at-risk, and low-income New Yorkers. These programs also demonstrate effective, long-term solutions and include: Supportive housing for families and individuals living with AIDS; job-training for homeless and formerly-homeless women; and permanent housing for formerly-homeless families and individuals. Our summer sleep-away camp and after-school program help hundreds of homeless children each year. The Coalition's mobile soup kitchen distributes over 900 nutritious hot meals each night to homeless and hungry New Yorkers on the streets of Manhattan and the Bronx. Finally, our Crisis Intervention Department assists more than 1,000 homeless and at-risk households each month with eviction prevention, individual advocacy, referrals for shelter and emergency food programs, and assistance with public benefits as well as basic necessities such as diapers, formula, work uniforms, and money for medications and groceries.

The Coalition was founded in concert with landmark right to shelter litigation filed on behalf of homeless men and women (*Callahan v. Carey* and *Eldredge v. Koch*) and remains a plaintiff in these now consolidated cases. In 1981 the City and State entered into a consent decree in *Callahan* through which they agreed: "The City defendants shall provide shelter and board to each homeless man who applies for it provided that (a) the man meets the need standard to qualify for the home relief program established in New York State; or (b) the man by reason of physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter." The *Eldredge* case extended this legal requirement to homeless single women. The *Callahan* consent decree and the *Eldredge* case also guarantee basic standards for shelters for homeless men and women. Pursuant to the decree, the Coalition serves as court-appointed monitor of municipal shelters for homeless adults, and the City has also authorized the Coalition to monitor other facilities serving homeless families.