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## **Rep. Coffman Introduces Homeless Veteran Families Act** *Bill Seeks To Assist Homeless Veterans with Children; Keeping Families Together*

**Washington, D.C.** — Today, U.S. Representatives Mike Coffman (R-CO) and Julia Brownley (D-CA) introduced H.R. 4099, the *'Homeless Veteran Families Act'*. The bill aims to assist community agencies who help homeless veterans with dependents, with housing costs—thus helping keep families together.

The Veterans Affairs' (VA) Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program is offered annually by the VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program to fund community agencies providing services to homeless veterans. H.R. 4099 would provide the Veterans Affairs' (VA) Secretary with the authority to reimburse GPD providers at a 50% rate for the costs of housing minor dependent(s) of homeless veterans while the veteran receives services from the grant recipient.

*"As a Marine combat veteran, I take pride in being able to help those who have served our nation" said Coffman. "The bipartisan 'Homeless Veteran Families Act' ensures we can offer homeless veterans and their children a safe shelter during their times of hardship and keep families together."*

Currently, the VA does not have the statutory authority to provide the reimbursements for the costs of services for minor dependents of homeless veterans. This in turn makes the GPD provider pay out of pocket for those services. As a result, some homeless shelters actually give preference to non-veteran homeless families because under the HHS program they do get a per diem for the minor dependent(s). A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that this led to a financial disincentive for providers and in turn, limited housing for veterans and their children. This disproportionately affects the female veteran population.

*"As a nation, we have a sacred responsibility to help those who served in uniform. It is simply unacceptable that we have veterans and their families living out on the street. I am proud to lead this bipartisan legislation, alongside Congressman Coffman, to provide more resources for community-based efforts that serve homeless veterans and their children." said Brownley.*

James Gillespie, who represents the Comitis Crisis Center, a local non-profit in Aurora, Colorado that assists homeless veterans, added, *“The brave men and women who fight for our homeland deserve the best our nation has to offer, especially a safe place to call home. We thank Congressman Coffman and Congresswoman Brownley for recognizing that homeless Veterans & their family members should be honored and taken care of through this critical amendment to the VA Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program. The best way we can thank our Veterans is by supporting them and helping them to support their greatest treasure, their immediate family members.”*

The bill also received support from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. *“Veterans who are homeless with their children have access to permanent housing supports through VA, but the affordable housing crisis our country is facing has lengthened the time it takes them to find appropriate housing with that support. They should not have to stay outside or in unsustainable situations during that period if we can offer them short term bridge housing to get themselves and their families off the street quickly,”* said Kathryn Monet, the CEO of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. *“The bill proposed by Representatives Coffman and Brownley would provide transitional housing programs funding and flexibility from the VA to provide this critical housing resource to homeless veterans and their families.”*

The following Veteran Service Organizations also support this bill: The American Legion, The Wounded Warrior Project, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Got Your 6, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and American Veterans (AMVETS).

H.R. 4099 will now be referred to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, on which Coffman and Brownley currently are members.

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Connect with Congressman Coffman:

