

DC for Democracy Policy Statement on Homelessness in the District of Columbia

Endorsed August 12, 2009

WHEREAS, DC for Democracy believes in the principle that everyone has a right to housing for the health and well being of the person and his family embodied in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and

WHEREAS, as a Human Rights city as proclaimed by the DC Council in December 2008, our elected officials have an obligation to secure this right for its residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of DC for Democracy urge its elected officials to end homelessness in the District of Columbia. Towards that end, we urge the following actions by the Mayor and the DC Council:

1. Take immediate steps to resolve the emergency shelter capacity crisis, including increasing the number of shelter beds to meet the increased demand
2. Increase housing resources in order to solve homelessness including transitional housing and permanent supportive housing
3. Implement a public process to determine the appropriate amount of shelter capacity, the location of shelter facilities, and access to services.
4. Maintain transparency, accountability and effective oversight of shelter management and permanent supportive housing programs.
5. Improve services for the homeless, including job skills training and mental health counseling

While we appreciate budget constraints, we believe the necessary resources can be found. The DC Fiscal Policy Institute recently published principles to guide efforts to balance the budget while maintaining the safety net for homeless individuals and families.

To achieve these aims, DC for Democracy will advocate for these policies with our local government. We will also collaborate with Fair Budget, a coalition of grassroots community groups and other organizations that is a leading advocate for the rights for the homeless.