



DAVID E. RYU  
COUNCILMEMBER, FOURTH DISTRICT

September 26, 2019

Dear President Trump:

I have noticed that you have taken a recent interest in California's homelessness crisis, felt most measurably in the City of Los Angeles. After many years of neglect, I am pleased to see the federal government notice this humanitarian crisis felt across our nation.

If you are interested in helping ease the crisis of homelessness in our nation's second-largest City, there is such an opportunity on a piece of federally-owned property at 5161 Sepulveda Boulevard in Los Angeles.

That is where an empty parcel currently sits, fenced-off and unused. This site, in the Los Angeles City Council District I represent, could serve as a location for homeless bridge housing. It is part of the property owned by the Army Reserve near an area known as the Sepulveda Basin.

In 2018, The City of Los Angeles reached out to the Army Reserve to inquire if it might be possible to study the feasibility of the site to build a temporary bridge housing shelter as part of Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti's "A Bridge Home" program. Senator Dianne Feinstein's office joined our urging to gain access to the site.

This site visit never happened. After initially agreeing to allow City experts to tour the location, the Army Reserve ceased communication and never allowed City experts to visit or study the site for potential housing. This lot continues to sit empty.

There are hundreds of people experiencing homelessness, many of them veterans, living in the immediate area. A bridge housing site at 5161 Sepulveda could allow people a safe place to heal, connect with services including mental health care and addiction treatment services, and get their lives back on track. There is no other similar sites in the area to serve this population.

What will solve homelessness are more homes, as well as increased access to services that have been routinely denied to poor and vulnerable Americans. What will not solve homelessness are cages, quarantines or shoddily-built structures lacking services or oversight. If you are interested in solutions to homelessness, I urge you to allow us access to this underused lot. If you are interested in scoring political points to the detriment of those experiencing homelessness and the communities in which they live, please look elsewhere.

The federal government has the opportunity to stand up and do its part to allow temporary shelters to be built on federal land. Californians and Angelenos have both stepped up to fund new programs and construction – including voting to approve new taxes to fund such housing not once, but twice, in Los Angeles over the past few years. The federal government has largely abandoned its role in this crisis, and is capable of providing much more funding and social services – as Mayor Eric Garcetti, many of my City Council colleagues, experts and activists have all pointed out.

If your Administration is sincerely interested in solutions to this crisis, the simplest and fastest way to help is by opening up federally owned property in the City of Los Angeles, like the lot at 5161 Sepulveda Boulevard, to study their feasibility for a temporary bridge housing. My office has spent over a year trying to access this federally-owned lot to no avail. If you would like to help, consider this your easiest and most obvious answer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. E. Ryu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "R".

David E. Ryu  
Councilmember, District Four

Cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Congressman Brad Sherman  
Mayor Eric Garcetti

