

[Floor Situation](#) | [Summary](#) | [Background](#) | [Cost](#) | [Staff Contact](#)

[H.R. 251, Homes for Heroes Act of 2015](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, July 14, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 251](#), the *Homes for Heroes Act of 2015*, under suspension of the rules. The bill was introduced on January 9, 2015, by Rep. Al Green (D-TX) and was referred to the Committee on Financial Services.

SUMMARY

H.R. 251 amends the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Act to transfer the Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs from the HUD Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs to the Office of the Secretary of HUD so that the Special Assistant will report directly to the Secretary. The Special Assistant shall: (1) ensure veterans have fair access to HUD housing and homeless assistance programs; (2) coordinate all HUD programs and activities relating to veterans; and (3) serve as a HUD liaison with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The bill includes requirements for the Secretary of HUD and the Secretary of the VA, in coordination with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, to submit annual supplementary reports to specified committees regarding the number of veterans provided assistance by HUD programs, coordination of services for veterans, and cost of administering programs to veterans.

BACKGROUND

The Federal government assists homeless veterans through a number of targeted Federal programs. In 2009, the Obama Administration announced a plan to end veteran homelessness by fiscal year 2015. Programs to assist homeless veterans are funded through three agencies: the VA, the Department of Labor (DOL), and HUD.¹ The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness is an independent agency consisting of 19 Federal Cabinet secretaries and agency heads with a mission “to coordinate the Federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation

¹ See CRS report, [“Veterans and homelessness.”](#) April 2, 2015.

while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal government in contributing to the end of homelessness.”²

According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), an estimated 140,000 veterans were homeless in 2014. According to HUD, homeless veterans living in emergency shelter and transitional housing are 91 percent men and 54 percent have a disability. While more than half of all veterans are age 62 and older, veterans in the 31 to 50 and 51 to 61 age groups make up 36 percent and 43 percent of the homeless veteran population, respectively.³

According to the bill sponsor, “[the bill] should improve the coordination of services for homeless veterans as well as require annual assessments that will help prevent low-income veterans from falling into homelessness and those who are already homeless. . . Homelessness among our veterans should be unacceptable for a government that asks so much of them. We must address this preventable condition such that no veteran is homeless.”⁴

A similar bill, [H.R. 384](#), passed the House in the 113th Congress on May 15, 2013, by a vote of [420 to 3](#). The Senate did not act on the House-passed bill.

COST

A cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is currently unavailable.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.

² See United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, [“About USICH”](#)

³ See CRS Report, [“Veterans and homelessness.”](#) April 2, 2015

⁴ See Press Release, [“Congressman Al Green Introduces Legislation to Assist Homeless Veterans.”](#) January 9, 2015