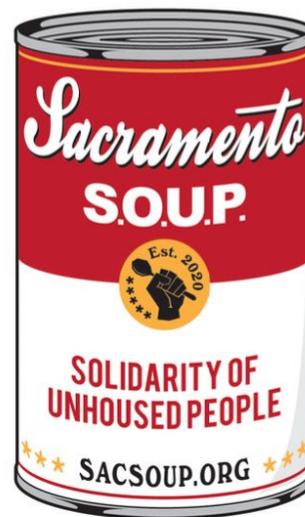


December 17, 2020

Senator Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Kamala D. Harris
501 I Street, Suite 7-800
Sacramento, CA 95814

Representative Doris O. Matsui
501 I Street, Suite 12-600
Sacramento, CA 95814



Last month, our Sacramento neighbor Gregory Tarola passed away while sleeping on the ground, wrapped in blankets still wet from the rain. The fact that Mr. Tarola was experiencing homelessness should not make his death on the side of a city street any less appalling.

Today we write to you as a coalition of citizens and community organizations concerned about the lives of the most vulnerable among us, our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Every night in our city, thousands of people sleep outside and Mr. Tarola's death will tragically be only one of many from the cold this winter.

We need a federal COVID-19 legislative relief package right now. People are dying on our streets because of congressional inaction.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the cracks in our fragile system and made an already untenable situation worse. More than 18 million Americans are unemployed and evictions loom — threatening to add to the more than 11,000 people estimated to be living on Sacramento's streets. Even the small safety net that hangs in the balance is shrinking as nonprofits are forced to modify hours or close their doors due to the dangers of this pandemic. In addition, the state is faced with an unprecedented budget deficit and local governments are being forced to lay off staff and dedicate enormous resources to public health responses.

At present in Sacramento, all shelter beds are full every night. There are long waiting lists for temporary and permanent supportive housing as well as affordable units, with no new options on the horizon. Even Warming Centers, which provide the absolute minimum to protect people from the cold, are closed due to onerous restrictions.

Programs like "Project Roomkey", which provides hotel rooms for unhoused residents that have tested positive for COVID-19, are at risk of shutting down without an infusion of federal funds. A

preventable problem could lead to thousands more on the streets, increased spread among our most vulnerable populations, and even more deaths.

While states, local governments, organizations, and individuals are continually forced to do more with less, we plead with you to work with your colleagues on immediate solutions. Lack of action has already led to increased displacement, despair, and deaths.

We request immediate congressional action on the following items to protect our city and unhoused neighbors from an explosive public health crisis.

Pass a Federal COVID-19 economic relief package that includes:

- **Extensions of CARES ACT support for state and local government programs like Project ROOMKEY**
- **Extensions of unemployment payments and the national moratorium on evictions at least 30 days beyond the end of the declared state of emergency,**
- **\$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) for the homelessness system,**
- **At least \$1 billion in Housing Choice Vouchers to help the elderly, sick, and disabled secure permanent housing, and**
- **\$100 billion in rental fund assistance to help millions of low-income renters nationwide avoid homelessness when eviction moratoria expire and they are confronted with massive arrearages of back-rent.**

Signed,



Caitly Maple
Co-Founder, Solidarity of Unhoused People
(SOUP)



Jimmy Fremgen
Director, Spark the Vote