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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

January 9, 2017

President-Elect Donald J. Trump
Trump Tower
725 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump:

I write to respectfully request that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) incorporate Victims of Domestic Violence (VDV) as a mandated subpopulation in the annual Point-in-Time Count (PIT count). Today, victims of domestic violence are hidden among homeless population in America. Without accurate and complete data, it is difficult to adequately address the needs of this vulnerable population.

Each year HUD requires local Continuum of Care Coalitions to report information about homeless persons through the Homelessness Data Exchange. This critical data assist in determining the size of the homeless population, both sheltered and unsheltered, locally and, when aggregated, nationally. The local PIT count identifies various subpopulations out of the total count to show their size and significance. When accounted for, this data plays an intricate role in shaping the federal policies that address homeless in our nation.

HUD specifies which subpopulations must be counted by the Continuum of Care Coalitions. Currently, Continuum of Care Coalitions are given the option of counting homeless domestic violence survivors. Some coalitions do while others do not, leaving the growing number of V DVs unidentified. As a result, the data for homeless V DVs is neither accurate nor complete.

The current structure of the PIT count has led to the invisibility of this growing problem. This lack of data has perpetuated the misrepresentation of how large the V DV population is within the aggregated homeless population, therefore resulting in a lack of available resources.

Between 2010 and 2012, for example, the New York City Continuum of Care Coalition counted V DVs and represented them as a subpopulation on the dashboard. In 2011, the number of homeless V DV was 7,233 and in 2012 the number had risen to 7,676, making V DVs the third largest subpopulation after individuals with "chronic substance abuse" and "serious mental illness." However, in 2013 and 2014, V DVs were not broken out as a homeless subpopulation in New York City and no data was provided to indicate the size of this population.

We must do everything that we can to end the link between domestic violence and homelessness. Requiring that Continuum of Care Coalitions count Victims of Domestic Violence (VDV) and recognizing V DVs as a specific subpopulation on the dashboard in the Point-in-Time Count (PIT count) would be major steps toward documenting this connection.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator