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California State Senate

SENATOR
SCOTT WILK
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



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BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4

April 26, 2018

Senator Richard Roth, Chairman
Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
Subcommittee No. 4 on State Administration and General Government
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: May 3, 2018 agenda request to fund Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council that they may achieve State Auditor recommendations

General Roth,

Today I write to request a hearing of the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4 to consider funding in the amount of \$750,000 to support the establishment of three full time staff – one executive and two support – positions at the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council.

As you know, California is currently facing its most severe housing crisis in history. Homeless statistics across the state have skyrocketed in recent years and despite ongoing efforts to address the issue those numbers continue to rise year after year. Many communities in our state have declared a state of emergency regarding homelessness and some have experienced unprecedented outbreaks of infectious disease as their homeless populations continue to rise.

In light of these facts, last year I requested the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to authorize the State Auditor to conduct an audit of our handling of homelessness in California and our methods of addressing this serious and growing issue. On April 19, 2018 that audit (report No. 2017-112) was released, in it a condemnation of our state's practices on homelessness and, recommendations for a path forward.

Among the recommendations made by the Auditor was that "the Legislature should...include funding in the Budget Act of 2018 that will allow for...the state homeless council to hire permanent staff, including the appointment of an executive director." This request is an attempt to do just that.

The auditor stressed throughout the report that the funding and fleshing out of the Council would lead to more federal dollars coming California's way and would alleviate the burdens placed on our smaller and more rural communities in trying to compete for federal Housing and Urban

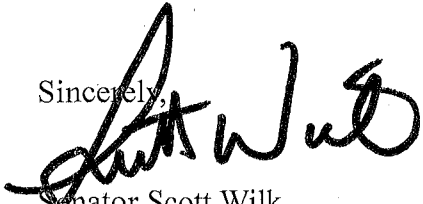
Development monies. The report also detailed state and local resources that the council could help to identify to fund homeless services in our communities and stressed the importance of the council's role in coordinating our statewide approach to homelessness; a role the Council is currently hamstrung from fulfilling due in large part to the fact it employs no permanent staff at present.

The audit laid out a number of recommendations for the council to better serve the many local agencies seeking to address homelessness throughout our state. However, without adequate staffing it will remain impossible for the Council to achieve those recommended goals and California's approach to addressing one of our most pressing issues will continue to be woefully inadequate.

The requested funding is reflective of the costs of salary and benefits for one executive director and two support staff which is a modest and minimal staffing level to achieve stated goals.

Thank you for your consideration of this request; I look forward to discussing it with you further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Wilk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S".

Senator Scott Wilk
21st Senate District