

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 3, 2023

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
House Agriculture Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
House Agriculture Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott:

We write to request inclusion of the bipartisan *Providing for Unhoused People with Pets (PUPP) Act* (H.R. 3957), in the upcoming Farm Bill. The bill establishes a grant program through the Department of Agriculture to provide funding to eligible facilities to retrofit their property to accommodate people experiencing homelessness who own pets.

As you know, the rate of families, veterans, and everyday Americans experiencing homelessness continues to rise, with an estimated 70,000 pet-owning Americans experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, many people find that emergency housing facilities do not have the proper facilities to accommodate their pets. As a result, individuals experiencing homelessness often face an impossible choice: seek a roof over their heads or stay with their pet. Further, evidence shows animal companionship helps the emotional well-being of people experiencing homelessness — including encouraging owners to leave abusive relationships, obtain sobriety if struggling with substance abuse, and avoid incarceration.

Successful federal and state level programs demonstrate that a modest investment can make a substantial difference in the rate of people experiencing homelessness. For example, the PUPP Act is modeled after the *Protecting Animals with Shelter (PAWS) Act* that was included in the 2018 Farm Bill and provides greater access to shelter for survivors of domestic violence and their animals. The program has been highly successful, with 23 grantees servicing more than 2,000 survivors of domestic violence and their pets between fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2022.

On the state level, the California Pet Assistance and Support Program allocated \$15 million in small grants to nonprofit shelter operators to retrofit their facilities to accommodate pets. Over two cycles, the program was oversubscribed two to one, which demonstrated the significant interest and need for these accommodations. Further, feedback from grantees showed the program removed substantial barriers to shelter for hundreds of people and contributed to the long-term success of those in permanent housing.

Over 100 organizations representing service providers, animal welfare groups, and organizations that assist people experiencing homelessness support this legislation and have requested its inclusion in the upcoming Farm Bill. We urge you to include this commonsense and modest grant program to help remove one of several barriers contributing to the national homelessness crisis.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress