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; 04/18/19 3:35 AM
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;;;BOSTON CITY COUNCIL (2PM)
;;;4/18/2019

test

>> GOOD AFTERNOON, MY NAME IS ED FLYNN AND I'M THE CHAIR ON THE COMMITTEE ON CITY NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS.

I'M JOINED BY THE SPONSOR COUNCILOR GARRISON.

I WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT THIS IS A PUBLIC HEARING AND IT IS BEING RECORDED AND BROADCAST LIVE ON CHANNELS COMCAST 8, RCN82 AND VERIZON 1964 AND WEBCAST BOSTON.GOV CITY COUNCIL SLASH TV.

AT THIS TIME IF YOU COULD PLEASE SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONE.

WE WILL TAKE PUBLIC TESTIMONY AND IF YOU COULD SIGN IN TO TESTIFY AT THE LEFT SIDE THERE.

AT THE START OF YOUR TESTIMONY PLEASE STAWRNL, ADDRESS AND AWE FILL INFORMATION.

TODAY'S HEARING IS ON DOCKET 0645.

THIS MATTER WAS REFERRED TIGHT COMMITTEE BY NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS.

FARE THE RECORD.

I HAVE -- FOR THE RECORD I HAVE A STATEMENT FROM COUNCILOR ANNISSA ESSAIBI-GEORGE THAT I'LL READ INTO THE RECORD.

>> I WANT TO THANK COUNCILOR GARRISON FOR FILING THE ORDER FOR THE HEARING REGARDING THE STATE OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON.

I REGRET I AM UNABLE TO ATTEND TODAY'S HEARING IN PERSON BUT I WILL BE REVIEWING THE RECORDING SO I CAN BE UP TO DATE.

AS CHAIR ON THE COMMITTEE OF HOMELESSNESS, MENTAL HEALTH AND

RECOVERY.

I'VE SEEN THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF HOMELESSNESS FOR OUR VETERAN COMMUNITY.

VETERANS SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES TO SERVE OUR COUNTRY AND AS A CITY WE NEED TO ENSURE THEY ARE TAKEN CARE OF UPON THEIR RETURN. THANKS TO THE INITIATIVE STARTED BY MAYOR WALSH THE CITY OF BOSTON HAS ENDED CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS BY HOUSING 1700 VETERANS.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS CONVERSATION IS ACKNOWLEDGING THE AMAZING WORK OUR NON-PROFIT LEADERS DO.

A FEW MONTHS AGO I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF DOING A RIDE-AROUND

WITH PINE STREETTH .

ANOTHER INCREDIBLE ORGANIZATION IS THE NEW ENGLAND FOR THE HOMELESS VET RULES.

AS WE FIND SOLUTIONS TO THESE ISSUES, IT IS VITAL THAT OUR NON-PROFIT LEADERS AND THE FRONT LINES CONTINUE TO BE AT THE TABLE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO REVIEWING THE TAPE AND WORKING TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THESE PRESSING ISSUES.

THE LETTER IS FROM COUNCILOR ANNISSA ESSAIBI-GEORGE.

ALSO FOR THE RECORD, I WILL READ THE HEARING ORDER.

ORDER FOR HEARING REGARDING THE STATE OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON.

THIS IS OFFERED BY COUNCILOR GARRISON.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAINTAINS THAT ROUGHLY 11% OF THE OVERALL ADULT HOMELESS POPULATION ARE VETERANS AND 58,000 VETERANS ARE HOMELESS ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT.

TWICE AS MANY EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS AT SOME POINT DURING THE COURSE OF A YEAR HOMELESS VETERANS TEND TO BE MALE 91% AND LIVE IN CITIES 76% HAVE A MENTAL AND/OR PHYSICAL

DISABILITY 54 OR BLACK, 39%.
WHILE THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS
THAT INFLUENCE HOMELESS IN
BOSTON SUCH AS THE SCARCITY OF
REAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND
MINIMUM WAGE UNDER \$15 AN HOUR
AND NOT ENOUGH ACCESS TO QUALITY
HEALTHCARE A LARGE NUMBER OF
DISPLACED AND VULNERABLE VET
REIGNS LIVE WITH THE NEGATIVE
EFFECTS OF POST TRAUMATIC STRESS
DISORDERS WHICH ARE OFTEN
EXASPERATED BY A LACK OF FAMILY
AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS.
VETERANS SUPPORT FROM PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS
THAT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO FIND
AND MAINTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT
AND TO THUS PAY FOR HOUSING AND
MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL
SPECIALISTS IN MILITARY TRAINING
AND NOT ALWAYS TRANSFERABLE TO A
CIVILIAN WORK FORCE PLACING SOME
VETERANS AT A SEVERE
DISADVANTAGE WHILE WORKING FOR
EMPLOYMENT AND AMONG WITH
VETERANS WHO HAVE MANTLE HEALTH,
VETERANS WITHOUT FINANCIAL MEANS
OR DO NOT HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS
THAT THEY CAN TURN TO FOR
ASSISTANCE OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES
HOMELESS AND ON THE STREET.
WHILE THE VA HAS SPENT MANY
YEARS TRYING TO ADDRESS VETERAN
HOMELESSNESS IT REMAINS TO BE
SEEN HOW EFFECTIVE YOUR PROGRAMS
HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE
NUMBER OF VETERANS THAT LIVE ON
THE STREETS IN BOSTON RIGHT NOW.
AND THE CITY OF BOSTON HAS A
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE
THAT OUR VETERANS RECEIVE THE
CARE AND BENEFITS THAT THEY HAVE
RIGHTFULLY EVERYONED IN THEIR
PLACE IN THEIR SERVICE TO OUR
COUNTRY AND TO CREATE A
WELCOMING AND SAFE HOME FOR
THEIR TO RETURN.
OFFERED BY COUNCILOR GARRISON
AND WITH THAT I WOULD LIKE TO
ASK COURTROOM GARRISON IF SHE
WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE AN OPENING
STATEMENT AS WELL.
>> THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU,
COUNCILOR FLYNN, FOR BEING THE
ORIGINAL CO-SPONSOR TO THIS
ORDER AND FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR
THIS HEARING.

I FOUND THIS ORDER BACK IN MARCH
AT A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE
STATE OF VETERANS HOMELESSNESS
IN THE CITY OF BOSTON.

BECAUSE WORKING FOR HOMELESS
VETERANS IS AMONG MY PRIORITIES
AS AN AT LARGE BOSTON CITY
COUNCILOR.

THE DAY I WAS SWORN IN TO THIS
COUNCIL I SAID THIS ISSUE IS
SOMETHING, THIS ISSUE IS
SOMETHING THAT I CARE DEEPLY
ABOUT AND COMPASSIONATELY.
IN FACT MY CHIEF OF STAFF
HIMSELF IS A VETERAN OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS ARMY NATIONAL
GUARD AND THE U.S. ARMY
RESERVES.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS SAY THAT 11% OF
THE OVERALL ADULT HOMELESS
POPULATION ARE VETERANS.

AND 58,000 VETERANS ARE HOMELESS
ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT.

AND TWICE AS MANY EXPERIENCE
HOMELESSNESS AT SOME POINT
DURING THE COURSE OF A YEAR.

HOMELESS VETERANS TEND TO BE
MALE ARE 91% SINGLE OR 98% LIVE
IN THE CITY.

76% HAVE A MENTAL AND PHYSICAL
DISABILITY.

54% ARE BLACK.

39% THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT
INFLUENCE ALL THE HOMELESS IN
BOSTON SUCH AS SCARCITY OF
AFFORDABLE HOUSING, MINIMUM WAGE
UNDER \$15 AND NOT ENOUGH ACCESS
TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE.

A LARGE ARE DISPLACED AND A LOT
OF VETERANS LIVE WITH NEGATIVE
EFFECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
ISSUES WHICH ARE OFTEN MADE
WORSE BY LACK OF FAMILY AND
SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK.

VETERANS SUFFER FROM CONDITIONS
THAT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO FIND
AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT AND TO

THUS PAY FOR HOUSING AND
MILITARY JOBS AND MILITARY
TRAINING ARE NOT ALWAYS
TRANSFERABLE TO THE CIVILIAN
WORK FORCE.

FOR MANY VETERANS IT IS AT A
SEVERE DISADVANTAGE WHEN LOOKING
FOR EMPLOYMENT.

WHILE THE DA HAS SPENT MANY
YEARS TRYING TO ADDRESS VETERANS
HOMELESSNESS IT REMAINS TO BE
SEEN HOW EFFECTIVE THE PROGRAMS
HAVE BEEN, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE
NUMBER OF VETERANS LIVING ON THE
STREETS IN BOSTON.

AT THIS HAVE I PHONE.

I'M HAPPY WE HAVE
REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CITY OF
BOSTON SUPPORTING HOUSING
DIVISION AND OFFICES OF VETERANS
SERVICES, MASS HOUSING AND THE
NEW ENGLAND CENTER AND HOME FOR
VETERANS WHO TESTIFY HERE TO
DATE AND ASSESS WHAT IS GOING
ON.

AS WELL AS SEVEN HOMELESS
VETERANS AND ALSO TO IDENTIFY
THOSE AREAS THAT TOGETHER WE CAN
IMPROVE.

I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT
THE CITY OF BOSTON HAS A
RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT
OUR VETERANS RECEIVE THE CARE
AND BENEFIT THEY HAVE RIGHTFULLY
EARNED THAT KEEP AMERICA SAFE
AND THAT WE MUST CREATE A
WELCOME AND SAFE HOME FOR THEM
IN BOSTON.

I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSION
THIS AFTERNOON.

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN.

>> THANK YOU COUNCILOR GARRISON
AND FOR THE RECORD I WOULD LIKE
TO RECOGNIZE OUR PANELISTS,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE SUPPORT
OF HOUSING DIVISION ADVISER TO
THE MAYOR FOR THE INITIATIVE TO
END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS.

ROBERT SANTIAGO DEPUTY
COMMISSIONER OFFICE OF VETERANS
SERVICES CITY OF BOSTON.

TOM IRONS FROM THE VINE OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MASS HOUSING
AND FOUNDER OF THE SOUTH BOSTON

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL.
AND LEADING VETERANS ADVOCATE IN
OUR STATE.

NOAH HOUSING SERVICES NEW
ENGLAND CENTER FOR AND HOME FOR
VETERANS.

AT THIS TIME, WOULD YOU LIKE TO
GIVE AN OPENING STATEMENT.

>> SURE.

THANK YOU COUNCILORS GARRISON
AND FLYNN FOR CALLING THIS
HEARING FOR THIS VERY IMPORTANT
ISSUE AND I THANK YOU FOR YOUR
OPENING REMARKS.

I AGREE.

THIS IS AN INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT
ISSUE FOR AN INCREDIBLY
IMPORTANT POPULATION.

SO OVER THE, SO BACK IN JUNE OF
2015, MAYOR WALSH RELEASED AN
ACTION PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS
AMONG RENT RUNS AND QUARANTLY --
VETERANS AND HOMELESS
INDIVIDUALS.

WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON THAT THE.
BEFORE THAT HE JOINED MICHELLE
OBAMA'S NATIONAL CHALLENGE TO
END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS SO IT
WAS PUT TO MAYORS ACROSS THE
COUNTRY.

SO WE HAD A HEAD START WHEN THE
ACTION PLAN WAS RELEASED.

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS WE'VE
TRANSFORMED OUR SYSTEM SO THAT
EVERY HOMELESS VETERAN THAT'S
IDENTIFIED IN THE CITY OF BOSTON
HAS A PATHWAY TO HOUSING.

BETWEEN 2014 AND 2018, WE HAVE
915 HOMELESS VET HUNDREDS AND
COUNCILOR ESSAIBI-GEORGE'S
LETTER REFERENCE WE ENDED
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG
VETERANS.

THAT MEANS WE ENDED LONG TERM
HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS WITH
DISABILITIES -- IT'S ALSO
SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THE NUMBER
OF HOMELESS VETERANS ON ANY
GIVEN NIGHT IN BOSTON.

2014 WE'VE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF
HOMELESS VETERANS WHO ARE HOW
MANYLESS ON A -- WHO ARE
HOMELESS ON A GIVEN NIGHT THE AT
30%.

MORE THAN TWO THIRDS ARE IN
CONDITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS.
MOST OF THOSE ARE LOCATED AT THE
HOMES FOR VETERANS AND THEY ARE
IN THESE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
PROGRAMS FOR UP TO TWO YEARS.
WHILE THEY WORK TOWARDS
PERMANENT HOUSING.

OUR WORK TO END VETERAN
HOMELESSNESS RAMMED UP IN 2014
AFTER THE MAYOR JOINED THE
CHALLENGE AND WE JOINED CITIES
ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO INTENSIFY
THE EFFORTS.

IN 2016, IT WAS MENTIONED WE
WERE CERTIFIED AS HAVING ENDED
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG
VETERANS BUT WE'VE ALSO MADE
SUBSTANTIAL STRIDES TOWARD
ENDING HOMELESS LIST WE HAVE A
SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY ALL VETERANS
WHO ARE HOMELESS ARE IN THE CITY
AND WE HAVE A LIST HOW FAR NAMES
AND REVIEW EVERY WEEK BY THE
CITY, VA HOUSING AUTHORITY AND
INCLUDING COLLEAGUE CENTER AND
HOMES FOR VETERANS.

AND OTHER CITY AGENCIES SUCH AS
THE OFFICE OF VETERAN SERVICES.
WE COME TOGETHER AND LOOK AT THE
MEANS OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN
THE CITY OF BOSTON AND WORK ON A
HOUSING PLAN FOR EVERYONE ON THE
LIST.

WE ALSO PROVIDE, WE HAVE
EMERGENCY SHELTER AVAILABLE FOR
EVERY HOMELESS VETERAN THAT'S
IDENTIFIED AS SLEEPING ON THE
STREET.

SO THERE ARE VERY SMALL NUMBER
OF HOMELESS VETERANS WHO SLEEP
OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON.

TYPICALLY IT'S LESS THAN FIVE.
OCCASIONALLY THERE WILL BE, YOU
KNOW, SIX OR SEVEN BUT I HAVEN'T
SEEN A NUMBER OVER TEN IN YEARS.
SO THOSE VETERANS ARE OFFERED
SHELTER EVERY NIGHT AND THERE'S
A BED AVAILABLE FOR THEM AND
PEOPLE MAKE CHOICES NOT TO COME
TO SHELTER FOR VARIOUS DIFFERENT
REASONS BUT THERE IS SHELTER FOR
EVERY VETERAN IN THE CITY OF
BOSTON.

WE ALSO HAVE THE CAPACITY TO HELP ALL VETERANS FIND PERMANENT HOUSING AND ASSIST VETERANS WHO ARE BECOMING HOMELESS AS THEY BECOME HOMELESS OR VETERANS WHO ARE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS. SO THE VA HAS INVESTIGATED SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES IN THIS ISSUE INCLUDING PROGRAMS THAT TARGET VETERANS WHO ARE AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS AS WELL AS VETERANS WHO ARE ALREADY HOME LESS.

I ALSO WANT TO MENTION THAT DND HAS FUNDED SEVERAL AFFORDABLE PROJECTS AND THIS CAME UP IN A HEARING THIS MORNING.

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS SPECIFICALLY.

SO SOUTH BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND COMMUNITIES DEVELOPED A PROJECT OF FEATURED HOMES WHICH INCLUDES 24 UNITS OF AFFORDABLE RENTING HOUSING FOR VETERANS.

HOMES FOR VETERANS CREATED A PROJECT THROUGH RENOVATING THEIR HISTORIC BUILDING AT 17 COURT STREET ACROSS CITY HALL PLAZA AND THIS SCOPE INCLUDED CREATING 35 NEW EFFICIENCY, BEAUTIFUL EFFICIENCY APARTMENTS AS WELL AS RENOVATIONS TO THE EXISTING 59 SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY UNITS IN THAT BUILDING AND THUS EXPANDING THE NUMBER AND QUALITY OF PERMANENT SUPPORT OF HOUSING UNITS SET ASIDE PARTICULARLY FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

35 NEW EFFICIENCY UNITS PREPARED WITH SERVICES FROM THE VA SO THAT IT WAS NOT JUST OFFERED VERY VULNERABLE WITH HOMELESS VETERANS BUT ALSO SERVICES TO HELP THEM STABILIZE AND MAINTAIN THAT RESIDENCY.

THE MARINE CAMPUS COMPLETED A PROJECT WITH 102 UNITS 82 OF EXRP AFFORDABLE WITH A VETERANS PREFERENCE AND WE ARE NOW WORKING TO RENOVATE ANOTHER BUILDING ON OUR CAMPUS THAT WILL BE 25 UNITS SPECIFICALLY FOR

HOMELESS VETERANS.

THEY WERE ALSO RECEIVED SUPPORT SERVICES FROM THE VA.

THAT'S NOT TO SAY WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY CHALLENGES.

THERE ARE CERTAINLY MORE CHALLENGES THAT WE FACE WHEN WE'RE WORKING ON ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS.

THEY ARE SIMILAR TO THE CHALLENGES WE FACE FOR ENDING ALL TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS IN BOSTON.

WE ARE SEEING A STEADY FLOW OF VETERAN FALLING INTO HOMELESSNESS.

THERE ARE RESOURCES BUT NOT EVERYONE HAS CAUGHT THOSE PREVENTION RESOURCES.

WHEN WE LOOK AT OUR DATA ON AVERAGE THERE'S ONE NEW VETERAN BECOMING HOMELESS EVERY DAY IN BOSTON ON AVERAGE.

WE'RE SERVING A REGIONAL POPULATION, THAT IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

VETERAN RESOURCES CALLED NEW ENGLAND CENTER AND HOMES FOR VETERAN AND THEY ARE SERVING FOLKS FROM ALL OVER NEW ENGLAND AND BEYOND.

AND WE ALSO HAVE REGIONAL VA SERVICES HERE, VA MEDICAL CENTERS THAT HAVE WORLD CLASS CARE AND VETERANS DO COME TO BOSTON FOR MEDICAL SERVICES.

WE'RE ALSO EXPERIENCING AN EXTREMELY TIGHT HOUSING MARKET AND THAT MEANS THAT EVEN ONCE VETERANS WHO ARE HOMELESS MIGHT RECEIVE THE HOUSING VOUCHER THEY COULD USE TO RAMP UP IN THE PRIVATE MARKET THAT HOUSING SEARCH TIME CAN TAKE A WHILE AND THAT MEANS THAT THEY REMAIN HOMELESS FOR LONGER BECAUSE HOUSING SEARCH IS SO DIFFICULT.

DESPITE THIS, WE'VE MADE INCREDIBLE PROGRESS ARE.

WE'VE REDUCED HOMELESS, VETERAN HOMELESSNESS BY 39% AT A TIME THAT OUR OVERALL HOMELESS POPULATION HAS NOT SHIFTED MUCH AT ALL, HAS NOT GONE DOWN BY ANYWHERE NEAR THAT AMOUNT.

SO WHAT THAT TELLS US WHAT WE'RE
TO GO AROUND VETERANS AND THE
INFLUX OF RESOURCES WE'VE HAD
SPECIFICALLY TO ADDRESS VETERAN
HOMELESSNESS IS WORKING.

SO GOING FORWARD, WE'RE
CONTINUING THE WORK.

WE KNOW WE'RE NOT DONE AND WE'RE
CONTINUING TO COLLABORATE WITH
OUR PARTNERS TO FIND MORE
RESOURCES TO INVEST IN MORE
HOUSING SOLUTIONS SO THAT WE
REALLY CAN SEE AN END TO VETERAN
HOMELESSNESS IN THE CITY OF
BOSTON.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU LIE LAW FOR THOSE
COMMENTS AND THANK YOU FOR BEING
WITH US.

NEXT I WOULD LIKE TO ASK ROBERT
SANTIAGO THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
OFFICE OF VETERAN SERVICES, U.S.
NAVY RETIRED TO GIVE AN OPENING
COMMENTS.

>> THANK YOU COUNCILOR FLYNN.
COUNCILOR GARRISON, THANK YOU
FOR HAVING ME HERE TODAY AND FOR
HAVING THIS HEARING ON THIS VERY
IMPORTANT ISSUE LIKE LEILA
MENTIONED THAT EFFECTS OUR
PATRIOTS CALLED BOSTON HOME.
WE AT THE OFFICES ON VET ARE YOU
SERVICES ARE COMMITTED TO ENDING
VETERAN HOMELESSNESS.

WE KNOW WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE.
WE HAVE SOME GREAT PARTNERSHIPS
WITH DND WITH THE NEW ENGLAND
CENTER WITH MASS HOUSING BOSTON
PUBLIC COMMISSION, BOSTON PUBLIC
HEALTH COMMISSION, PINE STREET
INN AND THOSE ARE JUST A FEW TO
NAME.

THESE CITY AGENCIES AND
ORGANIZATIONS ARE ALL PART OF
THE HOMES ARE FOR THE GREAT
PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY MAYOR
WALSH TO END VETERANS
HOMELESSNESS.

ONCE A SERVICE MEMBER COMPLETES
HIS OR HER TOUR OF DUTY, THE
23ER8D GOVERNMENT MUST
TRANSITION THEM TO CIVILIAN
LIFE.

IF THAT TRANSITION BREAKS, WE

WILL BE THERE TO HELP.
WE RECOGNIZE THE COMPLEXITIES OF
ISSUES FACING OUR VETERANS.
UNEMPLOYMENT, MENTAL ILLNESS,
OPIOID ABUSE OR INJURY.
FOR VETERANS EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS, STABLE HOUSING IS
THE FIRST STEP TO OVERCOMING
THOSE ISSUES.
COMMISSION OF THE OFFICE OF
VETERAN SERVICES IS TO
FACILITATE FULL AND EQUAL
PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF
LIFE BY VETERANS IN BOSTON.
OUR OFFICE RECOGNIZES AND
ENGAGES WITH VETERANS AND THEIR
FAMILIES, ADVOCATES FOR
ASSISTANCE THEIR TIME OF NEEDS
AND COMMITS THEM FOR THE
SERVICES THEY'VE EARNED.
THE VISION IS TO CONTINUE TO
FIND INNOVATIVE WAY TO EMPOWER
VETERANS AND MILITARY MEMBERS IN
BOSTON TO LIVE HEALTHY AND
THRIVING LIVES.
OUR FUNCTION IS TO ASSIST LOW
INCOME VETERANS AND THEIR
FAMILIES AS WELL AS EXPERIENCES
HOMELESSNESS.
THE PROGRAM KNOWN AS
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW ACTSES
AS INCOME FOR HOMELESS AND AT
RISK VETERANS.
THESE INCLUDE MILITARY,
SUBSIDIES AND DECK CONVERSATIONS
OF VETERANS GRAVES AND MEMORIAL
DAY WHICH BY THE WAY IS NEXT
MONTH.
TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, ON NUMEROUS
OCCASIONS WE HAVE PAID LANDLORDS
PAST DUE RENT AND THESE
LANDLORDS WERE IN THE PROCESS OF
EFFECTING VETERANS.
WE ALSO WORK WITH OTHER
LANDLORDS TO ENSURE THAT
VETERANS ARE KEPT HOUSED.
ONE OF THE WAYS WE DO THAT IS TO
PAY THE LANDLORD DIRECTLY FOR
THE VETERANS OF RENT THAT COME
OUT OF THEIR CHAPTER 115
BENEFITS.
WE HAVE ON SOME OCCASIONS PUT UP
VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN
HOTELS UNTIL WE CAN CONNECT THEM

WITH THE SERVICES THEY'VE EARNED.

CHAPTER 115 OFFERS VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, MEDICAL REIMBURSEMENT EVEN IF A VETERAN AND/OR FAMILY MEMBER DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR ORDINARY BENEFITS. THERE ARE TWO QUICK STORIES I WANT TO TOUCH ON.

THERE WAS A FAMILY OF SEVEN THAT LEFT THE STATE OF FLORIDA DUE TO A DOMESTIC ABUSE SITUATION. THEY ARRIVED HERE IN BOSTON. THEY CAME TO BOSTON BECAUSE THEY HEARD WE HAVE SOME OF BEST SERVICES FOR VET REMEMBERS IN THE COUNTRY -- VETERANS IN THE COUNTRY.

WE PUT THIS FAMILY UP AT FAIRGTON HOTEL FROM 208 TO 2018. WE PAID FOR THEM TO STAY IN THERE.

LIKE LAY LAW SAID THEY HAD A COUCHER BUT UNFORTUNATELY SOMETIME IT TAKES TIME FOR HOUSING TO COME THROUGH ESPECIALLY FOR A FAMILY OF SEVEN.

SHE NOW LIVES IN HYDE PARK WITH HER FAMILY AND IS ALSO EMPLOYED. ANOTHER STORY THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IS I WAS AT A COFFEE SHOP AND I WAS TALKING ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT AND THE SOURCES THAT WE PROVIDE TO VETERANS.

THE BARISTA THERE ASKED IF HE COULD TALK TO ME FOR A FEW MINUTES AND I SAID YES.

HE'S A NAVY VETERAN HIMSELF AND WE TALKED FOR A WHILE.

I FOUND OUT THAT HE'S CITY COUNCILOR AT THE VA FOR PTSD AND I ALSO FOUND OUT HE WAS COUCH SURFING SO I CONNECTED HIM TO THE PROGRAM AND GOT HIM A VOUCHER AND YOU NOW LIVES IN ROSLINDALE.

WE HAVE A CASE WORKER AND IS A SPECIALIST ON HOUSING AND WORKS WITH THE VETERANS AND HER HOUSING ISSUES.

SHE WORKS VERY CLOSELY WITH EVERYBODY AT THIS TABLE TODAY AS WELL AS OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

WHILE WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES, THERE'S ALWAYS WORK TO BE DONE AND I AM VERY CONFIDENT WITH THE GROUP WE HAVE HERE TODAY AND THE HOMES FOR THE BRAVE PROGRAM AT WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENSURE THAT OUR VETERANS ARE TAKING CARE OF AND THEY HAVE A ROOF OVER THEIR HEAD.

COUNCILOR FLYNN, COUNCILOR GARRISON, AGAIN THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON OUR VETERANS BEHALF.

>> THANK YOU.

TOM LIONS WHO IS ALSO A UNITED STATES MARINE AND FORMER DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF THE CITY OF BUSTON VETERAN SERVICES.

TOM.

>> THANK YOU COUNCILOR FLYNN, COUNCILOR GARRISON.

FOR THE RECORD I JUST WANTED TO SAY THAT I'VE BEEN PART OF THE VETERANS COMMUNITY IN BOSTON FOR WELL ON 35 YEARS NOW.

EVEN AS MY TIME AS DEPUTY COMMISSION OF BOSTON FROM 198 A TO 199 -- 1985 TO 1995, THE DOPE OF VETERANS SERVICES WAS PART OF THE OPENING SET THE NEW ENGLAND SHELTER FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

I'VE BEEN INVOLVED AS I SAY RIGHT FROM THE BEGIN CANNING.

AND HAVING LEFT THE CITY OF BOSTON TO BECOME THE CITY DIRECTOR WITH HOMELESS VETERANS NOW NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR HOMES AND VETERANS ONCE BETWEEN I SAW FIRSTHAND THE TESTIFY STATING IMPACT THAT HOMELESSNESS HAS ON OUR MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY.

WHEN I LEFT THE CENTER AND WENT TO WORK AT MASS HOUSING, I IMMEDIATELY GOT INVOLVED IN TRYING TO HELP CREATE AND PROVIDE HOUSING FOR OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I'VE SEEN OVER THE YEARS AND HAVE LEARNED IS, HOUSING PARTICULARLY FOR VETERANS WHO ARE HOMELESS CAN ONLY HAPPEN IF WE HAVE WRAP

AROUND SERVICES TO ALLOW THEM TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR SUCCESS AND LIVE BACK IN THE COMMUNITY.

AS HAS BEEN STATED, I SIT ON THE BOARD AT THE BRIGHT MARINE AND WE HAVE BUILT 102 UNITS OF HOUSING THAT WE HOPE TO HAVE OPEN IN THE FALL.

WE WILL BE CREATING 25SRO UNITS AGAIN WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE VA DASH PROGRAM NOT ONLY WILL BE PROVIDING THE HOUSING BUT THEY'LL BE ALSO GETTING CASE MANAGEMENT AND THE SERVICES ON CAMPUS THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

SO OVER THE YEARS, IT'S BEEN TALKED ABOUT TIME AND AGAIN. THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES ARE WHAT MAKES THE SUCCESS STORY. ONE AREA THAT I SAW SEVERAL YEARS AGO WORKING WITH AND TALKING WITH SHEILA DILLON WAS THE DASH VOUCHERS THAT VETERAN GET, SOMETIMES THE LAG TIME AND TIME OF TRYING TO PROVIDE OR TO FIND HOUSING IS SOME OF THE LANDLORDS DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT A VOUCHER IS OR WHAT COMES WITH THAT VOUCHER.

GIVEN THE MARKET, THE MENTAL MARKET IN BOSTON IT BECOMES HARDER AND HARDER FOR SOMEONE TO FIND AN APARTMENT AND I THINK BACK WHEN I WAS TALKING WITH SHEILA, THERE HAD TO BE 20 TO 25 OR MORE VETERANS WHO HAD A VOUCHER BUT JUST WAS HAVING A TOUGH TIME TRYING TO FIND A PLACE TO CALL HOME SIMPLY BECAUSE OF I THINK THE NOTION OF, AND I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE THE TERM HOMELESS VETERAN, I WOULD RATHER SAY A VETERAN WHO WAS FORMERLY HOMELESS BUT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE NOTION THAT YOU'RE NOT JUST GETTING A HOMELESS PERSON YOU'RE GETTING SOMEONE WHO SERVED THIS COUNTRY. AT MASS HOUSING, WE WERE ABLE TO CREATE OR HELP TO CREATE SOBER HOUSING FOR VETERANS THROUGH OUR CCRI PROGRAM, CENTER FOR

COMMUNITY COVER INNOVATIONS
WHERE WE PROVIDED MONEY TO
NON-PROFITS TO HELP CREATE SOBER
HOUSING.

AND WE INCORPORATED AN AREA OF
SPECIFIC BEFORE FOR VETERANS WHO
ARE HOMELESS.

WE ACTUALLY HAVE A SET ASIDE
PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPERS WHO ARE
CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR
THE COMMONWEALTH.

THERE'S A SET ASIDE PROGRAM WHEN
THEY BORROW DOLLARS FROM MASS
HOUSING THAT THEY DO PROVIDE LOW
INCOME AND/OR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN
APARTMENTS.

THE OTHER AREA I THINK THAT, I'M
NOT SURE IT GETS ENOUGH
ATTENTION IS THROUGH THE PUBLIC
HOUSING, THERE IS A VETERAN
PREFERENCE.

I'M NOT SURE IT'S USED ENOUGH
FOR BROUGHT UP ENOUGH FOR
ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO
ARE ON THAT LIST TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF.

SO I WOULD SAY TODAY, MAYBE IT'S
AN AREA THAT THIS COMMITTEE LOOK
AT AND ENSURE THAT THE VHA IS
OPENING UP THE OPPORTUNITY FOR
VETERANS PREFERENCE WHEN IT
COMES TO HOUSING.

>> THANK YOU, TOM.

AND MEREDITH CHRISTIANSEN IS
WITH NEW ENGLAND CENTER AND HOME
FOR VETERAN.

>> THANK YOU COUNCILOR FLYNN AND
COUNCILOR GARRISON.

I JUST WANT TO ADD TO WHAT WAS
SAID ABOUT VOUCHERS.

EVEN IF THEY HAVE A VOUCHER,
IT'S ONLY CAN GO ABOUT 0 DAYS TO
GET LEASED UP WITH IT AND IT THE
SAME VETTING PROCESS AS SOMEBODY
FILLING OUT THE SAME APPLICATION
THAT A MARKET RATE WERE GOING UP
AGAINST.

KIND OF COMPARED THE MARKET RATE
POPULATION AROUND.

GOING BACK TO WHAT LEILA SAID
ABOUT THE VETERANS, WE DO
IDENTIFY EVERY HOMELESS VETERAN
THROUGH THE CITY OF BOSTON.
WE KIND OF TALK ABOUT THEM

ENROLLED IN THE HOUSING TRACK.
WE ALL WORK TOGETHER
COLLABORATING WITH THE VA, PINE
STREET, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA,
BOSTON TOGETHER TO FIGURE OUT
THE HOUSING FOR VETERANS IN THE
CITY OF BOSTON.

>> THANK YOU MEREDITH.
COUNCILOR GARRISON, DO YOU WANT
TO BEGIN WITH A QUESTION AND
ANSWERING SESSION.

>> OKAY.

I'LL START WITH MS. MEREDITH
REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE NEW
ENGLAND CENTER AND HOMES FOR
VETERANS.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD
AND THE RESERVE ELIGIBLE FOR
BENEFITS THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER
AND HOMES FOR VETERANS AND MORE
GENERALLY WHAT IS THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR VETERANS TO
RECEIVE SERVICES.

>> WE TAKE ALL VETERANS OUT OF
THE RESERVE NATIONAL GUARD.
ONLY ABOUT 40% OF THE VETERANS
IN OUR TRANSITION APPROACH ARE
VA ELIGIBLE.

NATIONAL GUARD VETERANS EVEN
WITH A BAD CONDUCT DISCHARGE FOR
THE BRUNCH OF SERVICE.

WE PUT THEM IN THE PROPER
HOUSING TRACK THEY WOULD BE
ENROLLED FOR AND IF THEY ARE NOT
QUALIFIED FOR BASH OR ANY OTHER
SERVICES WE WORK WITH OTHER
RESOURCES FOR THEM FOR THE
VETERAN.

>> MRS. BERNSTEIN, WHAT ARE SOME
NEW WAYS THAT THE CITY OF BOSTON
COULD PARTNER MORE EFFECTIVELY
WITH NON-VA SUPPORT
ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE NEW
ENGLAND CENTER AND HOME FOR
VETERANS, RIGHT MARINE AND THE
HOME BASE PROGRAM AND BETTER
HOMELESS VETERANS FOR THE CITY
OF BOSTON.

>> SO MAYOR WILL YOU TELL SAID
IT VERY WELL.

THE WAY WE DEFINE A VETERAN IN
THIS EFFORT ENDING HOMELESSNESS
AMONG VETERAN IS ANYONE WHO EVER
RAISED THEIR RIGHT HAND.

SO VETERANS DO NOT NEED TO BE VA ELIGIBLE.

IN FACT, THEY MIGHT NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR ANYTHING AND THEY WILL BE A PRIORITY FOR OUR EFFORT.

SO WE ARE AT THE TABLE EVERY WEEK WITH THE AGENCIES THAT YOU NAMED WORKING ON HOW TO PIECE TOGETHER THE RIGHT PACKAGE FOR VETERAN IN FRONT OF US.

AND THE THE ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER SERVICES IS DIFFERENT, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WANT TO HEAR FROM ROBERT ABOUT THE ELIGIBILITY FOR CHAPTER 115 BUT THAT'S THE PATHWAY FORWARD FOR SOMEONE TO BECOME STABLE IN THEIR HOUSING.

SOMETIMES IT'S THE VETERAN PREFERENCE AT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY BECAUSE THE DEFINITIONS IN DIFFERENT BUREAUCRACIES IF YOU WILL ARE DIFFERENT AND ELIGIBILITY TRACKS ARE DIFFERENT.

YES, I'LL LEAVE IT THERE.

>> MR. LIONS, RECENTLY I FILED A PETITION HERE IN THE CITY COUNCIL LOOKING FOR A FORM OF RENT CONTROL AS A CONCRETE WAY TO ADDRESS THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISES HERE IN BOSTON. I OFTEN SAY THAT WE TALK ABOUT THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN BOSTON BUT THE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE ISN'T ANY AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

WHAT YOU EXPERIENCE AT MASS HOUSING, CAN YOU TALK ABOUT CONCRETE WAYS THAT WE CAN ASSIST OUR VETERANS FIND REAL ESTATE, FIND REAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING HERE IN BOSTON?

>> WELL, COUNCILOR, MASS HOUSING HAS DONE A COUPLE OF INNOVATIVE WAYS OF LOOKING AT HOPING VETERANS FIND HOUSING TO INCLUDE FORMALLY VETERANS WHO ARE HOMELESS.

ONE THROUGH OUR MORTGAGE PROGRAM, WE CREATED A PROGRAM CALLED HOME FOR THE BRAVE. EXCUSE ME, IT WAS HOME FOR THE

BRAVE NOW IT'S CALLED THE WELCOME HOME PROGRAM WHERE WE PROVIDE DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE LOWEST RATE FOR A VETERAN WHO WAS LOOKING AT PURCHASING A HOME OR A CONDO NOT ONLY IN BOSTON BUT THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH.

AS I SAID EARLIER, WE'RE PROVIDING LITERALLY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO HELP NON-PROFITS WHO ARE CREATING SOBER HOUSING FOR PEOPLE, FOR VETERANS COMING OUT OF PROGRAMS HELPING THEM PROVIDE DOLLARS TO BUILD AND CREATE SOBER HOUSING.

AND AS I SAID, THERE IS A SET ASIDE PROGRAM, A 3% SET ASIDE WHEN DEVELOPERS BORROWED MONEY FROM MASS HOUSING TO SET ASIDE PROGRAM FOR LOW INCOME RENTERS WHO WANT TO LIVE IN THE CITY.

I THINK THE NOTION OF EITHER TAKING OVER AN EMPTY LOT OR TAKING OVER A BUILDING IN TRYING TO CREATE AND BUILD VETERAN HOUSING HAS BEEN TALKED ABOUT MANY TIMES ABOUT DND.

I KNOW SHEILA DILLON AND THE FOLKS THERE TALKED ABOUT THE EMPTY LOTS THROUGHOUT THE CITY IN TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO HELP CREATE HOUSING, NOT JUST VETERANS HOUSING BUT HOUSING IN GENERAL AND IN FINDING WAYS TO CREATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

AND I THINK THE OPERATIVE WERE IS ALWAYS AFFORDABLE.

WHAT'S AFFORDABLE THESE DAYS AND BOSTON CERTAINLY I'LL BE HONEST, I LIVE AND GREW UP IN SOUTH BOSTON FOR 45 YEARS OF MY LIFE. I CAN'T AFFORD TO MOVE BACK TO SOUTH BOSTON.

THAT'S HOW OUT OF, HOW OUT OF SIGHT IT'S GOTTEN.

>> MR. SANTOS, WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO ASSIST THE LGBT VETERANS?

>> THANK YOU FOR THAT QUESTION. JUST FOR THE RECORD, I AM ALSO THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICERS OF OUT VETS.

SO I AM PART OF THE OUT VETS

GROUP.

ONE OF THE THINGS WE'RE DOING CAN IS WE'RE HELPING IN CHANGING THE DISCHARGE STATUS OF A LOT OF OUR VETERANS AND WE WORK CLOSELY WITH LEGAL DEFENSE CENTER.

THE VETERANS LEGAL DEFENSE CENTER OVER THERE AND THE ONLY PROBLEM WITH THAT IS SOMETIMES IT TAKES A VERY LONG TIME TO CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF A DISCHARGE.

BUT WE ARE LOOKING VERY VERY CLOSELY IN ENSURING THAT THOSE DISCHARGES ARE BEING CHANGED FOR THE LGBT VETERANS.

ANOTHER THING THAT WE DO IN THE CITY OF BOSTON, LAST YEAR WE HAD OUR VERY FIRST OF LGBTQ TOWNHALL AND WE'RE ACTUALLY HAVING ANOTHER TOWNHALL ON JUNE, WE CHANGED THE DATE.

I SAID JUNE 6 BUT IT'S ACTUALLY GOING TO BE JUNE 13.

WHAT WE DO THERE IS WE RECOGNIZE THE LGBT VETERANS AND WE HEAR THEM OUT, WE HEAR WHAT THEIR STORIES WERE, THEIR TIME IN SERVICE.

ONE IMPACT THAT SERVICE HAD.

ONE OF OUR TAKE AWAYS IS WE PROVIDE ALL THE VETERANS THAT ARE THERE WITH INFORMATION ON WHERE THEY COULD GET SERVICES AS WELL AS AN LGBT VETERAN.

I KNOW THE VA, THEY ACTUALLY HAVE A VERY GOOD ROOM AND THEY HAVE PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAMS AT THE JPVA FOR THE LGBT VETERANS AND ALSO THE TRANSCOMMUNITY AS WELL.

WE WORK AS CLOSELY AS WE CAN BEING AN LGBT VETERAN MYSELF IS DEFINITELY SOMETHING THAT I AM, THAT I ALWAYS THINK ABOUT EVERY DAY AND WHAT MORE CAN WE DO FOR THE LGBT VETERANS.

WE START WITH CHANGING THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THEIR DISCHARGE.

>> THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU COUNCILOR GARRISON.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE COUNCILOR LYDIA EDWARDS WHO IS

WITH US.
SHE'S BEEN A STRONG LEADER ON
VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILY
ISSUES AND SHE'S ALSO THE TAR OF
A U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN.
SO COUNCILOR EDWARDS, THANK YOU
FOR BEING HERE.
>> THANK YOU.
AND THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE
HEARING TODAY.
LEILA IS A FIXTURE YOUR
DEDICATION AND WHAT YOU'RE DOING
FOR THE CITY OF BOSTON.
AND EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR
THE HOMELESS.
IF I HAVEN'T MENTION THAT IN THE
PREVIOUS HEARING I WANT THAT TO
BE ON RECORD, YOUR WORK, YOUR
CREATIVITY, YOUR LEADERSHIP HAS
BEEN VITAL TO OUR PREVENTING AND
ACTUALLY ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN
THE CITY OF BOSTON.
SO THANK YOU.
ON THIS PARTICULAR POPULATION OF
FOLKS, I'LL GET INTO IT IN MY
QUESTIONS BUT I'M EXCITED TO
HEAR ABOUT WHAT THE NUMBERS ARE,
THE DEMOGRAPHICS.
I DO KNOW HAVING WORKED AT THE
CITY OF BOSTON MENTALLY ARE
ALREADY FULLY DEDICATED BUT OUR
PARTNERS IN TERMS OF THE
VETERANS HOUSING DOWNTOWN HAS
MADE SURE ANYONE WHO HAS
BASICALLY PLEDGED AT ANY POINT
IN THEIR LIFE IN THE MILITARY NO
MATTER HOW THEY LEFT THE
MILITARY IS ASSURED SERVICES AND
I'M VERY PROUD OF THAT.
I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE AS
WE'RE TALKING, WE'RE MAKING SURE
THAT ANY OF OUR PROGRAMS THAT
ARE DESIGNED ARE MEETING THE
UNIQUE NEEDS OF THIS PARTICULAR
POPULATION THAT HAS I THINK
UNIQUE WRAP AROUND SERVICE
NEEDS.
THE TIMING IS DIFFERENT AND ALSO
MAKING SURE THAT AS OUR
DEMONSTRATE PHOTOGRAPHICS THAT
THEY CHANGE.
MY MOTHER WAS IN THE MILITARY
AND MY FATHER MAKING SURE THE
PEOPLE IN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

AND COMMUNITIES NOW THAT DIDN'T
HAVE THEM WHEN THEY WENT IN THE
MULL TREE.

ALL OF THOSE UNIQUE NEEDS NEED
TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR WHILE
PROVIDING HOUSING.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR
LEADERSHIP AND DEAD CASE.

I THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE A
VERY POSITIVE CONVERSATION.

SO THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU COUNCILOR EDWARDS.

I'LL OPEN IT UP ON QUESTIONS.

I KNOW BOTH OR ALL FOUR OF YOU
TALKED ABOUT THE VOUCHER AND
WHAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT
PROGRAM IS.

MAYBE STARTING WITH YOU, TOM.

CAN YOU GIVE US SOME BACKGROUND
INFORMATION ON WHAT THAT VOUCHER
ACTUALLY DOES AND MAYBE WHAT
STEPS WE CAN DO.

ROBERT ALSO REFERENCED IT.

TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON HOW WE
CAN BE MORE HELPFUL TO VETERANS
AND TO LANDLORDS IN WHAT THE
POWER MIGHT BE.

ANY PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN WE
ALSO CAN THINK ABOUT.

>> THE VOUCHER, COUNCILOR, IS A
PRODUCT OF THE VA COMING
TOGETHER TO FIND A WAY TO
PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO A VETERAN
TO FIND HOUSING.

BUT IT'S MORE THAN JUST A
VOUCHER FOR MONEY, IT'S ACTUALLY
INDIVIDUALING A MANAGER TO HELP
WITH THE INDIVIDUAL, TO ASSIST
THEM TO FIND HOUSING BUT ALSO BE
ABLE TO CHECK IN WITH THAT
INDIVIDUAL TO MAKE SURE HE OR
SHE IS STILL CONTINUING AND IS
ON TRACK IN TERMS OF DOING THE
THING THEY SHOULD BE DOING,
HELPING THEM IN TERMS OF GETTING
THE RESOURCES INTO PROGRAMS.

THE THINGS THAT I THINK THAT
HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TALKED ABOUT
THAT WE FINALLY REALIZED OVER
THE LAST NUMBER OF YEARS HOW
IMPORTANT THE WRAP-AROUND
SERVICES ARE TO KEEP SOMEONE IN
THEIR APARTMENT AND TO MAINTAIN
THEIR SOBRIETY, TO MAINTAIN THE

ISSUES THAT THEY ARE GOING TO
SEE A COUNCILOR FOR MENTAL
HEALTH ISSUES.

IT'S REALLY A PROGRAM THAT
DOESN'T GET A LOT OF ATTENTION
BUT I THINK GIVEN WHAT IT DOES
AND WHAT IT CAN DO, GETTING THE
WORD OUT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY,
PARTICULARLY WITH LANDLORDS OR
WHOEVER, I THINK IT WOULD BE
HELPFUL IN WAYS THAT IT'S NOT
GOING TO EXPEDITE SOMEONE
FINDING SOMETHING BUT IT MAY AT
LEAST LIMIT SOME OF THE BARRIERS
THAT ARE INTO FINDING WHEN IT
COMES TO HAVING THAT VOUCHER AND
TRYING TO FIND A PLACE TO LIVE.

>> THANK YOU, TOM.

ANYONE ELSE WANT TO COMMENT.
MAYBE ROBERT, IS THERE ANY WAY
WE COULD MAYBE CONSIDER DOING A
PUBLIC AWARENESS.

>> I'M SORRY COUNCILOR.

THE PUBLIC AWARENESS PIECE TOM
IS TALKING ABOUT IS VERY
IMPORTANT ESPECIALLY LETTING THE
LAP LORDS KNOW WHAT THE HUD
VOUCHER REALLY IS, WHAT IT COULD
DO FOR THE VETERAN AND ALSO TO
LET THEM KNOW THEY'RE NOT JUST
GET CANNING AN APARTMENT OR A
PLACE TO LIVE TO A VETERAN BUT
THAT RENT HAVE YOU BEEN IS
GETTING THOSE WRAP-AROUND
SERVICES AND THAT'S VERY
IMPORTANT TO ALSO NOTE WHEN IT
COMES TO HUD.

NOT JUST THAT IT'S BEING
SUBSIDIZED FOR SERVICES FOR THAT
VETERAN.

>> THAT'S THE PIECE RIGHT THERE
AS TOM MENTIONED AREN'T AWARE
OF.

>> FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS I SAT
ON THE SECRETARY OF VA HOMELESS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

ONE OF THE ISSUES EARLY ON WITH
THE VOUCHER WAS A VOUCHER THAT
COULD ONLY BE GIVEN TO SOMEONE
WHO WAS CHRONICALLY HOMELESS.
AND THAT CREATED THAT I CALL IT
A BARRIER BUT IT WAS A BARRIER
IN THE SENSE OF SOMEONE WHO WAS
HOMELESS BUT NOT CHRONIC

HOMELESS WASN'T ABLE TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF GETTING A VOUCHER.
SO WE WERE ABLE TO MOVE THE VA
TO A POINT WHERE IT DIDN'T
ELIMINATE THE LANGUAGE OF
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS BUT IT
ALLOWED VETERANS WHO ARE HOME
LESS TO BE ABLE TO GET THE
VOUCHER.

AND I THINK AS I SAID EARLIER IN
MY STATEMENT, THE MOTION THAT WE
KEEP CALLING THEM HOMELESS
VETERANS CONTINUES TO SEND A
NEGATIVE MESSAGE.

EVEN AT MY TIME AS EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR AT THE NEW ENGLAND
CENTER, I TRIED TO EVEN GET
STAFF TO TALK ABOUT BUT WHEN IT
COMES TO WRITING GRANTS AND
GETTING MONEYS, YOU HAVE TO USE
THE WORDS HOMELESS VETERAN.

SO I THINK THE TERMINOLOGY AND
HOW IT WOULD BE PRESENTED IN ANY
PUBLIC AWARENESS I THINK IF
IT'S, IF IT'S A VETERAN WHO IS
HOMELESS, CONSTANTLY REFERRING
TO THE INDIVIDUAL AS A VETERAN
AND NOT HOMELESS, I THINK MAY
OPEN UP AND CREATE SOME NEW
OPPORTUNITIES.

>> THANK YOU, TOM.

LEILA, MEREDITH.

ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO
OFFER.

>> I'LL JUST SAY TO COUNCILOR
EDWARDS POINT THE VOUCHERS ARE
EXTREMELY VALUABLE BUT THEY ARE
ONLY WORK FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE VA
ELIGIBLE.

AS MEREDITH SAID, I THINK IT'S
MIRRORED IN THE ENTITLED
POPULATION MORE THAN HALF OF THE
HOMELESSNESS IN THE CITY OF
BOSTON DON'T HAVE THAT VA
ELIGIBILITY STATUS.

WHETHER IT BE BECAUSE OF THE
TYPE OF DISCHARGE THEY HAD, THE
AMOUNT OF TIME IN SERVICE, THE
BRANCH THEY SERVED IN, IF THEY
SERVED JUST IN RESERVES.

MORE OR LESS SOME REASONS PEOPLE
MIGHT NOT HAVE VA ELIGIBILITY.

SO WE'VE HAD TO BE CREATIVE
ABOUT BRINGING FORWARD OTHER

RESOURCES THAT MIRROR WHAT THE
VOUCH BASH HAS OFFERED.

WE HAVE RECEIVED 25 VOUCHERS
FROM THE STATE THAT ARE THE MASS
PROGRAM THAT WE PAIRED WITH
SERVICES TO KIND OF CREATE THIS
PACKAGE OF HAVING COST
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES SPECIFICALLY
FOR NON-VA ELIGIBLE VETS.

WE AGAIN LOOK TO THE HOUSE
AUTHORITY SOMETIMES FOR UNITS.
WE USE OTHER FEDERAL VOUCHERS
THAT COME THROUGH DND TO HOUSE
HOMELESS VETERANS WHO CAN'T CAN
GET ACCESS TO A DASH VOUCHER AND
MEREDITH PROBABLY HAD OTHER
AVENUES THAT APPLY FOR
MAINSTREAM AFFORDABLE HOUSING,
VETERANS SOME OF WHICH HAS A
VETERAN PREFERENCE AND SOME DOES
NOT.

WE TRY EVERY AVENUE TO GET
EVERYONE ON THE LESS HOUSED.
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET THIS
DONE IF WE JUST USE ONE
RESOURCE.

>> THE PROGRAM DOES PROVIDE
AUTONOMY.

THE VETERANS CAN PICK WHERE
THEY WANT TO MOVE TO WITHIN A
CERTAIN CATCHMENT AREA AND THEY
ARE GIVEN THE WRAP-AROUND
SUPPORT.

VETERANS WELCOME HOME WHICH ARE
THE MIDP VOUCHERS THAT ARE GIVEN
TO THE CHRONIC VETERANS WHO
HAVEN'T RV ELIGIBLE AND THAT
PROVIDES HOUSING GIVEN A CASE
MANAGER THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE
TIME THEY ARE HOUSED.

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS MAINLY
GETTING THEM TO RENT.

SOMETIMES THE VOUCHER IS HIGHER
THAN WHAT THEY NEED TO PAY.

WE'RE KIND OF WORKING WITH
HOUSING.

>> THANK YOU.

WHEN YOU HAD AFFORDABLE UNITS
THAT ARE AVAILABLE MAYBE FOR THE
LOTTERY SYSTEM.

WHAT TYPE OF OUTREACH DO WE DO
TO TRY TO ENCOURAGE VETERANS TO
APPLY FOR, WHAT OTHER WAYS COULD
WE BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN GETTING

OUR INFORMATION OUT TO THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY IN BOSTON ABOUT A LOT OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS THAT ARE HOMELESS. >> FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOTTERY SPECIFICALLY.

>> YES.

>> SO I'M FAIRLY CONFIDENT THAT MOST OF THE HOUSING SEARCH TEAMS LIKE THE ONE THAT -- PROJECTS THAT ARE OPENING UP.

WHAT'S TRICK E IS THE SCREENING CRITERIA FOR SOME MAINSTREAM AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCREENS HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS OUT OR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OUT TO TOM'S POINT.

SO PEOPLE MAY BE ON LISTS AND IT MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEED BUT WHEN IT COMES TO BEING SCREENED, THEY WILL BE TOLD THEY ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR LARGE NUMBER OF REASONS.

IT COULD BE THEY DON'T HAVE THE INCOME IN THEIR NARROW INCOME BAND THAT THAT PROJECT IS REQUIRING.

IT COULD BE THAT THEY HAVE HOUSING HISTORY THAT DOESN'T MEET THE STANDARD OF THAT PARTICULAR PROJECT.

IF YOU'VE HOMELESS FOR A WHILE YOUR HISTORY DOESN'T LOOK AS GOOD AS SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE CURRENTLY STABLY HOUSED.

IT COULD BE A PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD CONVICTION AND ALL OF THOSE THINGS WORK AGAINST PEOPLE WHO MIGHT HAVE BARRIERS TO HOUSING AND THAT'S WHY OUR FLICKERRIVE HAS TO BE REALLY CREATIVE ABOUT LOOKING AT ALL DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESOURCES THAT SOMEONE MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR AND NOT JUST WALKING INTO ONE IF WE'RE ONLY RELYING ON BASH AND MADE AFFORDABLE HOUSING A GOOD NUMBER OF VETERANS EXWHO ARE HOMELESS DON'T EVER GET HOUSED.

>> MEREDITH DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO ADD TO THAT?

>> YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE LOTTERY, SOMETIME THE MAI

PERCENTAGES THEY USE, FROM MY POINT BASED AT THE UNDER THIS DON'T FALL INTO THAT CATEGORY. MAYBE THE FEW WHO RECEIVE SSI AMONG WITH A HUNDRED PERCENT THEY CAN FIT IN KIND OF A 50% AMI BUT IF THEY'RE NOT WITHIN THE 30% AMI AFFORDABLE FOR THE LOTTERY THAT SCREENS OUT A GOOD PORTION OF VETERANS.

MY STAFF GETS A WEEKLY METRO LIST IN THE CITY OF BOSTON WITH THE COMMON LOTTERIES.

WE SEARCH FOR THAT WITH MY TEAM, WE COME IN AND TRY TO GET THEM ON AS MANY LISTS AS POSSIBLE. BUT IT'S INCOME-BASED.

AGAIN WITH THE HOUSING HISTORY IT'S ALSO ANOTHER CHALLENGE.

>> I WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO MASS HOUSING FOR EXCELLENT WORK FOR SO MANY YEARS ON HELPING VETERANS LOCATE APARTMENTS ACROSS THE CITY AND ACROSS THE STATE.

I KNOW YOU WORKED CLOSELY WITH DND AND THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT GOVERNMENT PLAY A ROLE IN THIS CRISES TO MAKING SURE THAT VETERANS ARE THAT HOMELESS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET A PLACE?

IS IT CRITICAL THAT THERE'S GREAT PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

>> ABSOLUTELY.

AND IT'S NOT JUST PARTNERSHIP GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IT'S PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE NON-PROFITS IN THE COMMUNITIES THAT THE VETERAN WANTS TO LIVE IN AND GO BACK TO IN MANY CASES.

IT'S CRITICAL IN THE SENSE OF THAT INDIVIDUAL WHO IS AT THE TIME OF HIS OR HER LIFE IS AT THE LOWEST POINT KNOW THAT THEY HAVE SOMEWHAT OF A SAFETY NET THAT THEY CAN GO TO AND GET SOME HELP TO BE ABLE TO GET BACK ON THEIR FEET BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY.

ONE AREA WHERE THE BRIGHT MARINE OUR COMMITTEE OUR HOUSING COMMITTEE LOOKED AT NOT ONLY

BUILDING THE TWO UNITS OF HOUSING BUT WE ALSO CREATED AN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHERE WE ARE NOW PROVIDING WHEN CALLED UPON OR WHEN ASKED TO PROVIDE FIRST AND LAST MONTH'S PAYMENT FOR A VETERAN WHO HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET A PLACE TO LIVE BUT DOESN'T NECESSARILY HAVE THE MONEYS TO BE ABLE TO PUT DOWN. SO WE'VE CREATED A POOL OF MONEY THAT WE HAVE AVAILABLE NOW THAT WE ARE ASSISTING VETERANS IN BOSTON TO BE ABLE.

NOT HAVE THAT AS A VARIOUS -- AS A BARRIER.

WE LEARNED THAT WITH SHEILA AND HER GROUP UNDERSTANDING AGAIN THE BARRIERS, WE WENT BACK AND FIGURED OUT A WAY HOW WE COULD BUILD IT INTO A BUDGET AND AGAIN IT'S AN EXAMPLE OF THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT NEED TO CONTINUE TO HAPPEN IF WE GET THROUGH THIS.

>> IF ANYONE NEEDS TO RESPOND TO TOM'S RESPONSE OR MY QUESTION HOW CAN GOVERNMENT WORK CLOSER OR BETTER WORKING CLOSE WITH NON-PROFITS AS WELL.

>> WHAT TOM SAID, IT IS HUGELY IMPORTANT NOT JUST THE CITY AGENCIES WORK TOGETHER BUT ALSO WITH THE NON-PROFITS AND ALL THE OTHER OWINGIONS UP THERE, A GREAT EXAMPLE IT WAS A VETERAN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND IT TOOK A FEW ORGANIZATIONS TO GET HIM HOUSED.

THAT WAS BETWEEN OUR OFFICE DND, THE COMMUNITY CENTER AND ALSO THE VA AND WE WERE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY GET THIS VETERAN NOT JUST THE SERVICES THAT HE NEEDED BUT ALSO EVENTUALLY GET A ROOF OVER HIS HEAD.

AND I BELIEVE HE'S IN WEST ROXBURY NOW. HE LIVES IN WEST ROXBURY.

>> THANK YOU.

I JUST HAVE ONE FINE QUESTION ON THIS ROUND BEFORE I ASK COUNCILOR EDWARDS TO PROVIDE Q&A.

BUT I KNOW THIS IS BEING
BROADCASTED ON TELEVISION BUT I
DON'T KNOW IF ROBERT OR TOM, WHY
IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THE CITY,
THE STATE, THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT
THAT GOVERNMENT PROVIDE STRONG
LEADERSHIP ON VETERANS ISSUES ON
MILITARY FAMILIES ISSUES.

1% OF THE POPULATION SERVED IN
THE MILITARY.

BUT JUST FOR THE AUDIENCE THAT
MIGHT BE WATCHING, WHY IS IT
CRITICAL THAT GOVERNMENT PLAY A
KEY ROLE IN THIS ISSUE.

>> WELL I THINK IT BASICALLY
COMES DOWN TO WHAT THE
GOVERNMENT SAYS WHEN YOU RAISE
YOUR RIGHT HAND AND YOU'RE
WILLING TO GO OFF AND GO TO WAR
IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES OR TO JUST
SERVE FOR HOWEVER MANY YEARS.
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU WHEN THE
TIME COMES THAT YOU NEED US.
AND I THINK FAR TOO OFTEN, THAT
GETS LOST IN WHATEVER THE BAIT
MAY BE ABOUT THE CONTROVERSY OR
WHATEVER MAY BE GOING ON WHEN
ONE IS SERVING.

FOR ME BEING A VIETNAM VETERAN,
I MEAN I COME BACK FROM VIETNAM
50 YEARS AGO LAST MONTH.

I CAME BACK TO A COMMUNITY IN
MANY WAYS A COUNTRY OF
INDIFFERENCE.

IT WASN'T ABOUT COMING BACK AND
FEELING GOOD ABOUT SERVICE, IT
WASN'T ABOUT COME CANNING BACK
AND HOW DO -- COMING BACK AND
HOW DO YOU HELP THIS KID AFTER
HE'S GONE THROUGH HIS WORST
NIGHTMARE HOW DO WE HELP HIM
MOVE FORWARD.

FOR ME AS A VIETNAM VET RUN I'VE
MADE IT MY MISSION ANY MAN OR
WOMAN WHO SERVES THIS COUNTRY
DOESN'T COME HOME TO WHAT I CAME
HOME TO.

THAT'S WHY I SIT HERE TODAY TO
BE ABLE TO HELP BE AN ADVOCATE
AND DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO
ENSURE THAT THE MEN AND WOMEN
WHO SERVED THIS CONCAN TREE
HONORABLY AND PROUDLY AND EVEN

THOSE WHO HAD DIFFICULTY WHILE THEY WERE IN THAT WE LIVE UP TO THAT OBLIGATION OF TAKING CARE OF THEM.

>> THANK YOU, TOM.

>> WHAT YOU SAID, COUNCILOR FLYNN GOES ALONG WITH 1% OF THE POPULATION EVER SERVES IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY.

THAT 1% IS A VERY SPECIAL COMMUNITY AND I CAN SAY FROM MY EXPERIENCES AS WELL BEING IN SERVICE FOR 20 YEARS, IN COMING OUT WHEN I

RETIRE, THERE IS A LOT OF, WHAT IS THE TERM I AM LOOKING FOR, I SAID IT YESTERDAY, THERE IS A LOT OF STRUCTURE THAT GOES IN PLACE WHEN YOU ARE IN THE MILITARY AND ONE OF THE TERMS THAT WE USED ONE INTRUSIVE LEADERSHIP SO IF YOU THE SERGEANT OF THE PLATOON OR THE LEADING PETTY OFFICER IN YOUR DEPARTMENT ON THE SHIP, YOU TALK TO YOUR SAILORS AND TALK TO YOUR SOLDIERS AND FIND OUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE AND WHERE THEY MAY NEED HELP.

BECAUSE YOU WANT THEM TO BE FOCUSED ON THE MISSION AT HAND.

.. SO WHEN THE SERVICE MEMBER LEAVES THE MILITARY THEY NO LONGER HAVE THAT STRUCTURE AND THAT IS MISSING.

THAT IS A BIG HUGE PART THAT IS MISSING IN THEIR LIVES AND THEY FIND IT HARD TO INTEGRATE INTO THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY AND THAT'S WHY IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE TAKEN CARE OF WHEN THEY LEAVE THE SERVICE.

.. THANK YOU, ROBERT.

DO YOU WANT TO COMMENT ON THAT?

>> OKAY, COUNCILOR EDWARDS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH, JUST WALK ME THROUGH SOME OF THE DEMOGRAPHICS.

I THINK YESTERDAY IN OUR WORKING SESSION I LEARNED THERE ARE ABOUT 17,000 VETERANS IN BOSTON.

>> THAT'S RIGHT.

>> HOW MANY OF THEM ARE

HOMELESS?

>> MOST RECENT KIND OF OFFICIAL HOMELESS COUNT WE HAVE FINALIZED IS FROM LAST YEAR'S COUNT AND THERE WERE 275 VETERANS HOMELESS ON THE -- ON THAT NIGHT, AND THE MAJORITY OF THOSE HOMELESS VETERANS WERE IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, WE STILL COUNT THEM AT AS HOMELESS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT IN A PERMANENT HOUSING SETTING BUT PRIMARILY IN THE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING BEDS, MOSTLY THAT ARE LOCATED IN NEW ENGLAND -- HOME SERVICE.

>> DO YOU SEE ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THAT NUMBER GOING UP OR DOWN FOR HOMELESS VETERANS?

>> OR BEING THE SAME?

>> SO THAT NUMBER, THE 275 IS SLIGHTLY UP FROM THE YEAR BEFORE, AND BEFORE THAT WE HAD SEEN A STEADY DECLINE.

SO WHEN WE LOOK AT THAT 275 AND WE COMPARE IT BACK TO 2014, IT IS 39 PERCENT REDUCTION.

>> WE HAVE NOT SEEN THAT KIND OF FLUCTUATION IN THE OVERALL HOMELESS POPULATION BUT BECAUSE OF AN INFUSION OF RESOURCES AND ATTENTION ON THIS POPULATION WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS.

OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR WE SEE A LOT MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF --

>> RIGHT, RIGHT.

>> SO -- AND I REALLY DO APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS. I FORGOT YOUR NAME, I AM SORRY.

>> I AM TOM.

>> TOM.

TOM, I REALLY DO APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT USING THE TERM HOMELESS VETERANS, SO WHAT WOULD BE THE TERM THAT WOULD BE MOST RESPECTFUL THAT I SHOULD USE?

>> I THINK A VETERAN WHO IS HOMELESS.

>> OKAY.

SO FOR THOSE VETERANS WHO DO NOT HAVE PERMANENT HOUSE DOEHRING NOT HAVE HOMES, TELL ME, I MEAN, EDUCATE ME, AND THE PUBLIC, HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN? YOU KNOW, THE

-- HOW DO VETERANS BECOME HOMELESS?

>> AND BY THAT, I DON'T MEAN TO -- I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND HOW WE GET HERE, RIGHT?

TO FIGURE OUT THE ROOT CAUSE THAT CAUSES THESE FOLKS TO BE IN THIS SITUATION TO HELP US COME UP WITH ACTUALLY RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS.

I AGREE WITH YOU, BY CALLING THEM HOMELESS IT ASSUMES THERE IS A VETERAN OVER 0 HEAP AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE WHO GET HOMELESS ..

>> RIGHT?

AND IT CONNOTES I THINK IT BLAMES THEM.

I THINK IT MAKES THEM SEAMLESS THAN, THAT THEIR STRUGGLE MATTERS LESS AND I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DO CLEAR THAT STIGMA -- STIGMA.

SO WHAT TYPICALLY HAPPENS THAT CAUSES SOME OF OUR NEIGHBORS, OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE VETERANS TO BE HOMELESS?

>> JUST LIFE -- JUST MY TAKE ON IT DURING THE TIME I WAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER, I WAS ASTOUNDED TO FIND OUT PROBABLY 85 TO 87 PERCENT OF THE MEN IN THAT FACILITY WERE FROM THE VIETNAM ERA.

IT WAS EYE OPENING TO ME.

>> OH.

>> YES.

>> YOU WERE DIRECTOR --

>> I WAS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FROM 1995 TO 2002.

>> OKAY.

>> SO IT WAS PRETTY EYE OPENING AS TO WHAT THAT POPULATION WAS INSIDE BUILDING.

ONCE I GOT IN THE BUILDING AND UNDERSTOOD IT, I STARTED TO SEE AND STARTED TO REALIZE THAT THERE WERE MULTIPLE ISSUES THAT CREATED THAT INDIVIDUAL IN TERMS OF FINDING HIMSELF ON THE STREET.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN A SUBSTANCE

ABUSE ISSUE.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN HIS TIME IN
COMBAT, IT COULD BE MULTIPLE
ISSUES.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN SOME MENTAL
HEALTH ISSUES HE HAD TO GOING
INTO THE MILITARY BUT
EXACERBATED BY COMBAT OR HIS
SERVICE AND THEN TURNING TO
DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOL WHEN THEY
GOT HOME.

I THINK YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER
THAT TIME FRAME WHEN MEN AND
WOMEN WERE COMING OUT OF THE
MILL THINK BACK THEN, THE VA
DIDN'T HAVE THE PROGRAMS AND
SERVICES THAT WE HAVE TODAY.

>> RIGHT.

>> SO THE CENTER WAS THE VA'S
OUTPATIENT CLINIC WHERE IF YOU
HAD -- YOU WENT TO THE CLINIC
AND WROTE YOU A PRESCRIPTION
AND, YOU KNOW, SAID GO ON YOUR
WAY, AND DON'T CALL US, WITH HE
CALL YOU, WHICH NEVER HAPPENS.
AND SO YOU HAD MANY VIETNAM
VETERANS WHO DIDN'T HAVE THE
PROPER -- HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO TALK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE,
WHAT THEY WENT THROUGH AS YOUNG
MEN, AND THE VA WASN'T PREPARED
FOR THE KIND OF ISSUES THAT THE
VIETNAM VETERANS WERE DEALING
WITH WHEN THEY COME HOME.

THE NOTION OF BEING IN VIETNAM
ON TUESDAY AND BEING BACK HOME
ON A THURSDAY DIDN'T EXIST IN
KOREA OR WORLD WAR II.

I HATE TO GET TOO INTO THIS.
BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO
DOWNLOAD WHAT WE WENT THROUGH TO
WHOEVER AND SO IT WAS ALL
INTERNALIZED AND YOU GET HOME
AND YOU PUT YOUR BAG AWAY AND
YOU TRY TO GET ON WITH YOUR LIFE
AND IF YOU WEREN'T ON THE
COMMUNITY AND FAMILY THAT COULD
HELP YOU THROUGH THAT, YOU
TURNED TO, YOU KNOW, THE DRUGS
AND/OR THE ALCOHOL.

>> SELF MEDICATED?

>> AND BECOME SELF MEDICATED,
YES.

>> DO YOU WANT TO ADD?

>> TOM SAID, IT IS A LOT OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS AS WELL, BECAUSE THIS IS AN AGING POPULATION AS WELL, SO -- I SEE VETERANS WHO JUST SIMPLY GOT CAST OUT OF THEIR UNITS, THAT 100 PERCENT, ALONG WITH SSI IT DOESN'T COVER THE BOSTON RENT RIGHT NOW, SO A FEW OF OUR SENIORS, THE 62 AND OLDER VETERANS THAT IS SOME OF THE REASONS THEY END UP COMING TO THE SHELTER.

>> I MEAN, THAT IS REALLY INTERESTING, THAT WE ARE STILL DEALING WITH THE GENERATIONAL IMPACT I THINK THE GOVERNMENT'S -- OF MISHANDLE OF RETURNING FOLKS FROM VIETNAM STILL, AND THE RIPPLING EFFECT OF THAT TO THIS DAY THAT SOMEONE COULD STILL BE HOMELESS FROM NOT HAVING TO UNDO WHAT WAS DONE TO THEM AND NOT HAVING THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT WHEN THEY DID COME BACK.

DO YOU FIND WITH THE CURRENT WARS, AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, THAT'S A DIFFERENT GENERATION OF VETERANS THAT IS COMING BACK, HAVE WE BEEN MORE RESPONSIVE, DO YOU FIND IN THE POPULATION LESS OF THOSE VETERANS IN THE HOMELESS POPULATION?

>> I THINK -- I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THE LESSONS LEARNED FROM VIETNAM IS NOW WE HAVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR THESE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE COMING HOME AND ARE TRANSITIONING BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY, AND WE HAVE, YOU KNOW, DEPARTMENTS LIKE THE CITY OF BOSTON VETERANS SERVICES. WE HAVE VETERAN SERVICES OFFICES IN EVERY COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH SO THAT THEY HAVE SOME PLACE TO GO, THEY HAVE A DIRECT LINK TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT THEY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF.

AND AGAIN IT IS ALL ABOUT, YOU KNOW, IT IS REALLY ALL ABOUT THOSE TWO WORDS, WHEN THEY COME HOME, WELCOME HOME.

I MEAN, THAT, THOSE ARE TWO WORDS, TONY, MY PAL, OVER HERE, TONY AND I DIDN'T HEAR THOSE TWO WORDS.

AND THOSE ARE TWO .. POWERFUL WORDS TO A MAN, WOMAN COMING HOME FROM THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY.

>> THANK YOU.

>> THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES -- PEOPLE ARE ACKNOWLEDGING IT EXISTS AND IS IT A REASON FOR ANY KIND OF SERVICE UPGRADE OR KIND OF A SERVICE CONNECTION BASED ON COMING BACK WITH PTSD, IT IS MORE AWARE OF THIS.

>> SO TRANSITIONING OVER FROM JUST ABOUT LEARNING ABOUT OUR POPULATION, I WANT TO TRANSITION TO SOME OF THE HOUSING PROGRAMS TODAY THAT I AM A LITTLE MORE FAMILIAR WITH.

SO LIKE I AM A LANDLORD, FOR EXAMPLE AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THIS PROGRAM.

FOR THE HUD -- I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THAT.

SO HAS THE CITY CONSIDERED POSSIBLY A MATCH OR A WAY IN WHICH LANDLORDS -- SO IF WANTED TO, YOU KNOW, HONOR MY MOM'S SERVICE, HONOR SERVICE IN GENERAL, I HAVE AN AVAILABLE UNIT OF MY HOUSE, WHERE WOULD I GO TO LIKE HAVE A QUALIFYING VERTIGO INTO THAT? WHERE WOULD I GO?

DO WE HAVE A PLACE FOR ME TO GO?

>>

>> WE DO HAVE A LIAISON THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS.

WE DO HAVE MANY HOUSING SPECIALISTS AND -- VETERANS WITH THE DASH PROGRAM OR OTHER SUBSIDIES.

SO I WOULD CONTACT THIS NONPROFIT OR VETERAN SERVICES HERE AND YOU WOULD DIRECT ME TO YOUR NONPROFIT TO SAY, YES, WE HAVE A LIST, THEY COME WITH THESE WRAP AROUND SERVICES. HOW LONG DO THE WRAP AROUND SERVICES LAST?

>> THAT DEPENDS ON WHAT KIND OF

TEAM THAT THEY HAVE.

IT IS USUALLY -- SOMETIMES THEY
CAN GRADUATE OUT OF A PROGRAM.

>> OKAY.

AND -- BUT THEY CAN STILL
RECEIVE SERVICES GOING FORWARD.

>> I THINK IT ALSO DEPENDS ON
THE SERVICES THEY ARE RECEIVING
AND WHAT THEY ARE RECEIVING IT
FOR BUT I KNOW WITH WE, WE
ACTUALLY DID A STUDY, COUNCILOR,
YOU MENTIONED WE DID GET A
COUPLE OF PHONE CALLS FROM
LANDLORDS TELLING US THEY WOULD
LIKE TO HONOR THE VETERANS AND
WE JUST LIKE YOU SAID WE HAVE
OUR LISTS A GOND DOWN THE LISTS
UNTIL WE FIND SOMEBODY WHO IS
WILLING TO --

>> I THINK IT WOULD BE GREAT IN
TERMS OF THE PUBLIC, IN TERMS OF
OUT REAM, OUT 0 REACH ON OR
AROUND MEMORIAL DAY OR ON OR
AROUND VETERANS DAY TO LITERALLY
PUSH THAT OUT THERE ON SOCIAL
MEDIA SAYING, YOU KNOW, RENT TO
A VET, RENT TO A VET, MAKE
INSURING THAT LANDLORDS, AND
HERE I AM, I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT
IT.

THAT, SO WE CAN KNOW AND WE CAN
DO THAT.

ALSO ONE FORM OF OUTREACH THAT
MIGHT BE WORTH PARTNERING WITH,
WE HAVE THE RENTAL REGISTRY
PROGRAM WITH ISD AND SO THEY PUT
OUT -- I GET AN HE MAY, I AM
SUPPOSED TO REGISTER MY UNIT BUT
MAYBE THAT IS SOMETHING THE CITY
MAY ALSO CONSIDER IS WHEN THAT
E-MAIL GOES OUT, TIME TO
REGISTER YOUR UNIT ALSO, DID YOU
KNOW ABOUT SUCH AND SUCH PROGRAM
TO RENT TO A VET?

MAKING SURE THAT VETS ARE
INCLUDED.

I THINK 10,000 UNITS WE HAVE,
THE RENTAL REGISTRY PROGRAM HAS
THAT, THEY ARE NOT ALL EMPTY,
OBVIOUSLY, BUT I THINK THAT IS
ONE OUTREACH PROGRAM -- GO
AHEAD, I AM SORRY.

>> AT VARIOUS TIMES WE HAVE --
FOR THIS TIME OF RECRUITMENT

CAMPAIGN.

I DON'T THINK WE HAVE DONE IT
RECENTLY BUT IT IS A WAY TO
REACH A VAST NUMBER OF
LANDLORDS.

IT DOES START TO GET COMPLICATED
BECAUSE DIFFERENT PROGRAMS HAVE
DIFFERENT ELIGIBILITY -- IT HAS
TO BE TRIAGED AND SOMETIMES WE
HAVE A LOT OF LANDLORDS COMING
IN WHO DON'T HAVE APARTMENTS AT
THE RIGHT PRICE POINT FOR THE
RENT SORES THERE IS ONE SIDE
THAT IS -- SOMETIMES THERE IS A
LOT OF FALSE STARTS WITH THAT,
BUT WE HAVE TRIED THAT AND, YOU
KNOW, IT MIGHT BE WORTH TRYING
AGAIN AND SEE WHAT IT YIELDS.

>> IT IS ONE THING TO KNOW, I
MIGHT NOT GET TOP MARKET BUT I
WILL GET CONSISTENT MARKET AND A
TENANT THAT WILL COME WITH SOME
WRAPAROUNDS -- JUST IN THE HOUSE
SO ME AND THE VETERAN, RIGHT?
SO MAYBE FOR OTHER PEOPLE WHO
ARE SINGLE AND BY THEMSELVES
THEY MAY WANT TO KNOW THE
SERVICES AND THERE IS SOMEONE TO
COMMUNICATE WITH.

COULD YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT, I
DON'T KNOW IF THE LANDLORD
GUARANTEE PROGRAM IS STILL GOING
ON OR HOW THAT IS -- I AM
HOPEFUL.

>> IT DOES STILL EXIST EVEN
THOUGH AGAIN WE HAVE NOT SEEN A
LOT OF LANDLORDS TAKE IT UP.
I AM HAPPY TO DESCRIBE IT.
SO IN THE LOOK TO A FEW CITIES
THAT HAVE CREATED FUNDS FOR
LANDLORDS, INCLUDING SEATTLE, I
BELIEVE DENVER AND SEVERAL
OTHERS, AS A RECRUITMENT
STRATEGY, AGAIN, CREATED A FUND
THAT WOULD GUARANTEE A CERTAIN
AMOUNT OF FUNDING AT THE -- UP
TO \$10,000 FOR WHO WOULD RENT TO
SOMEONE WHO EXPERIENCED
HOMELESSNESS OR A FAMILY WHO
EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS AND THE
AGREEMENT WOULD BE MADE THE
LANDLORD WOULD AGREE TO REACH
OUT TO A LIAISON THAT WORKS AT D
AND D, IF THERE WERE ANY ISSUES

THAT AROSE AND THE LIAISON WOULD TRY TO MEDIATE THOSE ISSUES. IF THE CONCERNABLE EVENTUALLY WERE NOT ABLE TO BE RESOLVED, THE CITY WOULD BACK IT UP TO \$10,000 THAT COULD BE PAID FOR LEGAL FEES, THAT COULD BE PAID FOR DAMAGES IF THERE WERE DAMAGES AND WHAT OTHER CITIES FOUND IS YOU CREATE A FUND LIKE THIS, YOU GET SOME INTEREST FROM LANDLORDS.

A LOT OF PEOPLE LEASE UP AND THERE ARE VERY FEW PROBLEMS SO THE CITY DOESN'T END UP HAVING TO PAY OUT MUCH FOR A LOT OF LANDLORDS PARTNERING ON THIS. WE DIDN'T SEE THAT IN BOSTON. AND I DON'T KNOW IF THAT IS A REFLECTION OF THE MARKET OR THAT WE, YOU KNOW, NEED TO DO ANOTHER PUSH TO MARKET THIS TO LANDLORDS. WE HAVE RECEIVED SOME FEEDBACK THAT LANDLORDS -- THAT ONCE YOU SAYING THERE IS A GUARANTEE FOR SOMEONE, THEY ARE QUESTIONING WHY DOES THIS PERSON NEED A GUARANTEE?

WHICH IS KIND OF A BACKWARDS WAY OF THINKING ABOUT IT.

REALLY MOST OF THE TIME, YOU KNOW, THE TENDENCY, TENANTS ARE EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AND THE LANDLORDS AND TENANTS HAVE A VERY STRONG RELATIONSHIP.

IT WAS REALLY ABOUT TRYING TO CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF LANDLORDS SO THAT THEY WOULD GO AHEAD AND PARTNER WITH US, BUT WE HEARD FROM SOME LANDLORDS THAT WERE DOING THE OPPOSITE.

SO I THINK THERE IS SOME KIND SOME KIND OF BRAND MARKETING WE NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY TO REACH LAND LANDLORDS WITH THAT.

WE HAD A FEW HOUSEHOLDS THAT WENT WITH THAT AND AS FAR AS I KNOW THESE ARE GOING VERY WELL.

>> EXCUSE ME.

SO THE PROGRAMS DILEMMA GUARANTEE PROGRAM WAS PROVIDING SUPPORTIVE SERVICE FORCE AT LEAST TWO YEARS AS I UNDERSTOOD FOR THE PERSON, THEY WOULD HAVE

WRAPAROUND SERVICES AND THE INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE -- CONTACT SUN IF THEY MAYBE HAD AN ISSUE WITH THE LANDLORD SO THEY JUST DIDN'T WANT THE LEASE THEY WANTED TO MAKE SURE THE PERSON SUCCEEDED IN BEING IN THE HOME, AND SO I JUST THINK I WOULD LOVE TO SEE IT EXPANDED OR ALSO IT SEEMS LIKE IT IS ALMOST THIS HUD -- WITHOUT THE INSURANCE OF UP TO \$10,000 FOR THE INDIVIDUAL. THE OTHER IDEA OR QUESTION I HAVE IN TERMS OF HOUSING PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS IS, HAVE YOU LOOKED AT OF BONUSES, GIVING BONUSES OR SOMETHING THAT PROVIDE FOR FOLKS WHO WANT TO BUILD, IF THEY BUILD ADDITIONAL UNITS FOR VETERANS? HAVE WE LOOKED AT THAT IN TERMS OF -- I MEAN, I WOULD JUST -- IT IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT MAY BE WORTH BUILDING AT. WE ARE ABOUT TO BUILD SO MANY UNITS IN EAST BOSTON, FOR EXAMPLE, WHY WE DON'T LOOK AT THE ZONING TO MAKE SURE A SEARCH CERTAIN PERCENTAGE GOES TO VETERANS, OF COURSE THERE IS AN AFFORDABILITY ISSUE BUT MAKING SURE WHEN WE GO TO PLAN, RIGHT, IN THE PLANNING FOR THE CITY WE SHOULD BE PLANNING FOR VETERANS IN MIND, WE DO IT FOR SENIORS AND SOME LOW-INCOME FAMILIES BUT I THINK IF WE WANT TO BE INTENTIONAL WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THE LITERALLY PLANNING UNITS FOR VETERANS, HAVE WE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT? HAS THAT BEEN ON THE TABLE? >> OH -- MARINE RIGHT NOW IN THE -- >> YEAH. >> IN THE FALL WE WERE ABOUT TO OPEN UP 102 UNITS OF VETERANS HOUSING, VETERANS PREFERENCE, YOU KNOW, THERE IS SOME QUESTION OF WHETHER WE CAN GET 102 VETERANS, I DON'T THINK THAT IS GOING TO BE A PROBLEM, BUT THE WAY WE STRUCTURE IT IS THREE TIERS OF, OR LEVELS OF PAYMENT,

LOW INCOME, MIDDLE RANGE AND THEN SOME FOLKS AT THE HIGHER END, BUT IT WAS -- IT WAS DONE BASICALLY BECAUSE IN THE COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION AT THE BOARD LEVEL AND WHAT WE WANTED TO DO AT THE CAMPUS WAS, YOU KNOW, THERE HAD BEEN NO VETERANS HOUSING BUILT IN THE CITY OR IN THIS AREA SPECIFICALLY FOR VETERANS PROBABLY SINCE 1946. AND SO WHAT WE LOOKED AT WAS HOW TO UTILIZE OUR CAMPUS AS WE TRANSFORM IT.

THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT WAS TO BRING THE VETERANS TO THE CAMPUS AND HAVE THEM LIVING THERE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT WE HAVE ON-SITE BETWEEN SAINT ELIZABETH AND STEWART LEFT CARE SO THAT'S HOW THAT -- THAT IS HOW THAT GOT CREATED.

>> SO ON THAT CAMPUS, NOW THEY ARE IN THE PROCESS OF ADDING I THINK IT IS 25 --

>> 25.

>> 25 UNITS IN A SEPARATE BUILDING THAT WILL BE SPECIFICALLY FOR FORMERLY HOMELESS OR VETERANS WHO HAD EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS RECENTLY.

AND THERE WILL BE SEVERAL -- IN THAT BUILDING AS WELL AND ALSO RECENT PROJECTS, HOMELESS VETERANS, NEW ENGLAND CENTER HOME FOR VETERANS, 17 COURT STREET CREATED 35 NEW EFFICIENCY UNITS SPECIFICALLY FOR VETERANS WHO HAD EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS AND THEY RENOVATED 59 OF THE SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY UNITS THAT WERE ALREADY ON-SITE.

AND THEN A FEW YEARS BEFORE THAT, SOUTH BOSTON, YOU HEARD THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND CARE DOT CAME TOGETHER TO CREATE PATRIOT HOMES WHICH WAS 24 UNITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR VETERANS.

I AM NOT ON THE DEVELOPMENT SIDE SO I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION AROUND ZONING OR

OTHER INCENTIVES THAT HAVE BEEN
PUT FORWARD FOR VETERANS HOUSING
BUT WE CAN GET BACK TO YOU.

>> I JUST THINK ESPECIALLY
WITH 10,000 NEW UNITS IN BOSTON,
THAT IF WE DON'T, IF WE DON'T
PLAN FOR IT AND DON'T REQUIRE IT
FROM DAY ONE, YOU ALWAYS IVE
ALWAYS ADJUST THE NUMBER LATER
ON BUT IT IS HARDER TO SAY WHAT
ABOUT US, WHAT ABOUT US AFTER
THE FACT, AFTER THE BUILDING HAS
BEEN BUILT, AND THEN SAY WELL,
THEY COME WITH THE VOUCHERS OR
THE VOUCHERS MAY NOT BE THERE,
SO ON AND SO FORTH.

THE OTHER -- DID YOU WANT TO ADD
SOMETHING?

>> I AM SORRY.

>> WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING RIGHT
NOW ON THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER IS
CLOSELY WORKING WITH D AND D AND
IN THE CURRENT TIME TO CREATE
WHAT WE HAVE IN THE CENTER AND
THE COMMUNITY AS WELL, SO IT
WOULD BE EFFICIENCY UNITS FOR
VETERANS THE ABOUT 12 FOR
SWRERTS AND MAYBE EIGHT FOR JUST
THE SENIORS HOUSING.

>> WONDERFUL.

>> SO WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY AND
PUT IN SOME -- D AND DS.

IT IS IN THE PROCESS TO CREATE
MORE AFFORDABLE UNITS,
AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

>> I HAVE -- MY NEXT QUESTION IS
BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, I MENTIONED
IN THE WORKING SESSION THERE
THOSE WHO SERVED DIRECTORIALY
AND THOSE WHO SERVED INDIRECTLY.
SO OF THE POPULATION OF VETERANS
WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS RIGHT NOW, HOW MANY
OF THEM HAVE FAMILIES?

>>

>> MY MOTHER IS A VETERAN,
RIGHT?

SO IF SHE WAS EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS RIGHT NOW, THE FISH
RECEIVE, EFFICIENCY WOULDN'T
WORK FOR HER, RIGHT?

SHE MAY BE ABLE TO GET IN SOME
OTHER SHELTERS MAYBE OR MY
SISTERS MAY BE OLD OR SOME OF

THE SHELTERS DON'T ACCEPT BOYS
AFTER A CERTAIN AGE SO IF WE
TALK ABOUT VETERANS WE NEED TO
TALK ABOUT THE FOLKS WHO
INDIRECTLY SERVED WITH THEM,
THOSE WHO SAY WELCOME HOME, AND
HOW DO WE MAKE SURE THAT WHEN WE
ARE PLANNING FOR -- TO PREVENT
THE HOMELESSNESS, RIGHT, THAT WE
ARE DOING IT FOR ALL?
THAT ENTIRE UNIT?

>> THANKS FOR THAT QUESTION.

I DON'T KNOW THE EXACT NUMBER,
BUT I DO KNOW THAT THROUGHOUT --
THROUGH OUR OFFICE ON MORE THAN
01 OCCASION, TWO OR THREE
OCCASIONS, IT IS VERY HARD TO
FIND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OR
SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE DID,
WE PUT THEM UP IN A HOTEL AND WE
PAY FOR THAT HOTEL.

WE TRY TO GET THEM A VOUCHER AND
ONCE THEY GET THAT VOUCHER IT IS
JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE
THEY GET HOUSED.

I HAD MENTIONED EARLIER THERE
WAS A FAMILY OF SEVEN THAT FLED
FLORIDA, DOMESTIC ABUSE
SITUATION, AND SHE CAME TO US
FOR ASSISTANCE, WE PUT HER IN
THE FARRINGTON HOTEL I BELIEVE
IT IS AND THERE FROM FEBRUARY TO
MAY, UNTIL SHE FINALLY GOT A
HOUSE WHERE SHE COULD HAVE A
FAMILY OF SEVEN.

AND WE WORKED WITH THE
DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES AT THE
STATE LEVEL BECAUSE OF CHAPTER
115 TO GET PRIOR APPROVAL TO GET
THEM TO GET -- TO BE ABLE TO PAY
FOR THE HOTEL STAY.

BUT THAT'S WHAT WE DO IN OUR
OFFICE.

WE ACTUALLY -- WE PAY FOR -- WE
PAY FOR THE HOUSING TO MAKE SURE
THEY HAVE A PLACE TO STAY AND
THAT IS FAMILY UNIT GETS A HOT
MEAL EVERY NIGHT.

>> I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT AND
WHEN WE ARE BUILDING IF WE ARE
NOT BUILDING FOR VETERANS WITH
FAMILIES, THE RIPPLE EFFECT 0
THAT HOMELESSNESS IMPACT AS LOT

MORE THAN THAT INDIVIDUAL PERSON, SO TO CLARIFY, THE -- MARINE, THERE WERE NINE STUDIO -- THIS IS 102 UNITS.

THERE WERE NINE STUDIOS, 371 BEDROOMS, 262 BEDROOMS AND EIGHT, THREE BEDROOMS, THERE WERE SOME LARGER UNITS, YOU ARE RIGHT, THE EFFICIENCY UNIT WERE FOR SINGLE ADULTS AND SOME OF THOSE WERE SET ASIDE FOR WOMEN. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY.

ONE FLOOR DEDICATED FOR WOMEN. >> THAT IS WONDERFUL.

>> HOMELESS VETERANS MALE AND FEMALES NOW, I WOULD SAY VOUCHERS, LIKE TO -- VOUCHER OR THE VOUCHERS THAT GO THROUGH D AND D THOSE WILL BE FLEXIBLE BASED ON HOUSEHOLD PRICE. YOU KNOW, THEY HAVE TO BE FOUND ON THE PRIVATE MARKET BUT IF A VETERAN SERVICES A DASH, HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD IS A VETERAN IT WILL COVER THE ENTIRE FAMILY.

>> THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.

>> THANK YOU, COUNCILOR, THANK YOU COUNCILOR EDWARDS.

AT THIS TIME I WANT TO OPEN IT UP TO ANY PUBLIC TESTIMONY FROM ANYONE HERE.

IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO TESTIFY. I DON'T THINK ANYONE SIGNED IN BUT IF YOU CAME AFTER AND STARTED, YOU ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO TESTIFY AS TOM LIONS MENTIONED A GOOD MUTUAL FRIEND IS HERE, IS TONY MOLINA WITH THE PURE RICAN VETERANS, PUERTO RICAN VETERANS .. THANK YOU TO TONY AND OTHER PUERTO RICAN VETERANS FOR YOUR SUBSTANTIAL SERVICE BUT ALSO I THANK TONY FOR BEING THERE FOR THE MILITARY FAMILIES.

WE RESPECT THE GREAT WORK YOU HAVE DONE ACROSS OUR CITY. WOULD YOU LIKE TO TESTIFY, TONY?

>> TONY, YOU CAN GO TO THAT ONE OVER THERE.

..
>>

>> THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR

INVITING ME, AND, ED,
COUNCILORS.

WE ARE REAL GOOD FRIENDS.

I JUST HAVE A VERY SMALL CONCERN
AND THIS IS REGARDING MANY OF
THE VETERANS.

AS YOU READ, WE ARE AMERICAN
CITIZENS, WE ARE AMERICAN
CITIZENS, A LOT OF THE VETERANS
WHO SERVED IN PUERTO RICO, ONE
OF THE PROBLEMS WE EXPERIENCED,
THEY NEVER ASKED US DO YOU KNOW
HOW TO SPEAK ENGLISH?
THEY SAID DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE
YOUR GOINGER?

>> YES.

WE CAN, WE ARE VERY GOOD AT
SPECIAL NEEDS.

AND A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, A
YEAR AND A HALF AGO, WE HAD A
LOT OF THEM COME UP TO THE
STATE, ESPECIALLY MASSACHUSETTS
BECAUSE THEY HEAR MASSACHUSETTS
IS PROBABLY THE BEST STATE IN
THE NATION TO TAKE CARE OF
VETERANS AND BOSTON IS THE BEST
CITY, IN MY OPINION TO TAKE CARE
OF OUR VETERANS.

BUT WE HAVE A LOT OF VETERANS
WHO ARE LIVING WITH FAMILIES,
BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO PLACE TO GO
AND WHAT I WOULD LOVE TO HAVE
THE CITY OF BOSTON THE STATE IS,
DO AN OUTREACH FOR ALL OF THESE
VETERANS WHO ARE HAVE NO WAYS
BUT THEY HAVE SERVICE AVAILABLE.
I WOULD RECOMMEND THERE BE AN
OUTREACH IN SPANISH THE, SPANISH
TO THE PUERTO RICAN VETERANS
THAT ARE HERE AND JUST VERY
CURIOUS DATA.

PUERTO RICO THIS CAME OUT ABOUT
TEN YEARS AGO, PUERTO RICO HAS
MORE VETERANS PER CAPITA THAN
ANY OTHER STATE.

>> WOW.

>> MORE KILLED IN ACTION THAN
ANY STATE PER CAPITA.
AND MORE PURPLE HEART PER CAPITA
THAN ANY STATE.

THIS IS NOT A POLITICAL MOVE.
I DIDN'T PLAN WHAT I WAS GOING
TO SAY BUT I WOULD SAY THAT.
I HOPE IT NEVER ANSWER AND THIS

PROGRAM FOR VETERANS -- I JUST
CAN GOT A CALL FROM PUERTO RICO.
WHO SUPPORTS -- WHO LEFT A WEEK
AGO AND HAVEN'T HEARD FROM WHO
WAS GOING TO BOSTON.

WE DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS AT.

>> CAN DO AN OUTREACH AND MAYBE
VETERANS -- NEXT TUESDAY WILL BE
MY BIRTHDAY, AND 50 YEARS SINCE
I GOT SHOT IN VIETNAM.

SO -- AGAIN, THE PEOPLE LIKE YOU
FOLKS WHO CARE FOR VETERANS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>> THANK YOU, TONY.

>> THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

>> JUST KEEP TALKING.

IT TURNS ON.

>>

>> TONY, MOLINA, THANK YOU VERY
MUCH FOR SAYING THAT.

AS A PUERTO RICAN VETERAN MYSELF
WITH.

>> WHO LIVES IN PUERTO RICO AND
I SPEAK SPANISH [SPEAKING
SPANISH] I WANT TO GET DOWN
WITH YOU AND SIT DOWN WITH YOU.
WAY TONIGHT REACH OUT TO THE
PUERTO RICAN VETERANS, AND LET
THEM KNOW AS FAR AS I AM
CONCERNED THEY ARE NOW BOSTON
RESIDENTS AND WE ARE GOING TO
TAKE CARE OF THEM. SO WE WILL
TALK AND DISCUSS AND SEE WHERE
WE DO THE OUTREACH TO GET THOSE
PUERTO RICANS AGAIN AND KNOW WE
HAVE SERVICES FOR THEM.

>> THANK YOU, ROBERT, AND I HAD
THE OPPORTUNITY WHEN I WAS ON
ACTIVE DUTY, JOINT TASK FORCE
GAUGHAN KNOW, GUANTANAMO, THE
NATIONAL GUARD MOVEMENT THAT WAS
ACTIVATED WAS THE PURE KNOW/FOE
RICAN NATIONAL ARMY GUARD AND I
BECAME GREAT FRIENDS WITH THEM,
I SERVED WITH THEM 13 MONTHS AND
OUTSTANDING SOLDIERS,
OUTSTANDING AMERICANS AND ALWAYS
THERE FOR EVERYBODY AND A REAL
TEAM LEADERS AND COMPASSIONATE,
COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE PANELED
ALSO PROSECUTE PROUD TO
REPRESENT A WHRIEWJ PUERTO RICAN
POPULATION IN BOSTON AS WELL BUT
WE HAVE THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR

YOU, TONY, AND THE TREMENDOUS
WORK THAT VOW HAVE DONE ACROSS
OUR CITY.

AND, ROBERT, WHEN THAT MEETING
WAS SCHEDULED COULD I ALSO BE
INCLUDED WHEN YOU TALK TO TONY?

>> OKAY.

>> SO I DON'T THINK ANYONE IS
HERE TO TESTIFY BUT WITH THAT, I
WILL ASK COUNCILOR GARRISON
MAYBE WE CAN GIVE CLOSING
COMMENCE.

>> -- COMMENTS.

>> I GUESS I WOULD LIKE TO, WHAT
I WOULD LIKE TO SAY IS I HOPE WE
ARE WORKING SO KEEP VETS FROM
BECOMING HOMELESS AND I WILL DO
MY PART AS THE AT LARGE COUNCIL
I LO DO MY PART.

>> THANK YOU, COUNCILOR
GARRISON.

>> COUNCILOR EDWARDS.

>> THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR
SERVICE AND RESERVICE AGAIN TO
MAKE SURE VETERANS ARE TREATED
WITH THE DIGNITY AND RESPECT
THEY DESERVE.

>> THANK YOU, COUNCILOR EDWARDS,
I WANT TO SAY, THANK YOU TO
MAYOR WALSH AND HIS TEAM FOR
OUTSTANDING WORK IN THE CITY AND
ACROSS THE STATE ON HELPING OUR
VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES.
I SAY ACROSS THE STATE AS WELL
BECAUSE MAYBE WALSH ALSO
PROVIDED STRONG LEADERSHIP AS A
STATE LEGISLATOR ON MILITARY
FAMILY ISSUES, THANK YOU FOR
YOUR WORK ON HOUSING ISSUES AND
FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP, ROBERT,
THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE WITH US
AND FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING THE
SERVICE FOR OUR COUNTRY.
MEREDITH, AND TO OUR FRIENDS
ACROSS THE STREET YOU ARE DOING
OUTSTANDING, OUTSTANDING WORK
AND PLEASE KNOW THAT THE CITY
COUNCIL IS ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU
AND FOR YOUR TEAM AND WHATEVER
WE CAN DO TO BE OF ASSISTANT AND
I ALSO WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO
OUR GOOD FRIEND TOM LIONS, I
ALWAYS RESPECTED AND ADMIRED, HE
WAS ONE OF MY UNCLE'S BEST

FRIENDS GROWING UP IN SOUTH
BOSTON, BOTH VIETNAM VETERANS
TOGETHER, SO TOM I WANT TO SAY I
THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP ON
VETERAN ISSUES AND ALSO BEING A
GOOD FRIEND OF MINE AS WELL.
SO I AM GOING TO ASK IF WE KEEP
THIS HEARING IN COMMITTEE AND
MAYBE WE CAN FOLLOW UP MAYBE
ABOUT FIVE OR SIX MONTHS FROM
NOW AND WE CAN TALK MORE ABOUT
THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.
I ALSO WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO
COUNCILOR GARRISON FOR CALLING
THIS HEARING A AND I WANT TO SAY
THANK YOU TO COUNCILOR EDWARDS
FOR YOUR LEADER SHIM AND
COUNCILOR GARRISON FOR YOUR
LEADERSHIP ON VETERAN AND
MILITARY FAMILY ISSUES ACROSS
OUR CITY AND THANK YOU AND THIS
MEETING IS ADJOURNED.

>>