

Lisa Subeck

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Republicans All Talk, No Action on Ending Homelessness

MADISON – Today, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) submitted for introduction the “Housing First” legislative package after circulating the bills for co-sponsorship. The five Housing First bills invest in evidence-based solutions to end and prevent homelessness in Wisconsin. While the legislation received broad support among Democratic legislators, not a single Republican legislator was willing to co-sponsor even one of the five bills to invest substantive resources into fighting homelessness. The legislation introduced today by Representative Subeck provides a stark contrast to an anemic package of Republican bills that recently passed the Assembly under the guise of addressing homelessness, while providing little more than another committee and another pilot program to talk about the problem.

“As Republicans collectively pat themselves on the back for paying some lip service to the serious problem of homelessness, there are children and families and hard-working men and women sleeping in their cars, under bridges, and on our streets throughout the state,” said Rep. Subeck. “Those who are without a home do not have time to wait for another study committee or pilot program; they need affordable housing now.”

Wisconsin’s neighboring midwest states invest substantially more than Wisconsin to fight homelessness. Minnesota invests \$44.3 million annually; Illinois spends \$49.5 million; and Michigan spends \$16.6 million each year. Wisconsin spends just \$3.3 million annually in dedicated funding to fight homelessness, an amount that should at least be tripled to \$10 million according to the Wisconsin Coalition Against Homelessness. The Housing First package would triple Wisconsin’s investment in addressing homelessness and target funds to evidence-based best practices.

“It is time for Republicans to put their money where their mouth is and invest real resources into housing programs that keep people in homes and off the streets. The ‘Housing First’ legislative package is built on investing in evidence-based approaches that work,” said Rep. Subeck. “These bills are the clear next step in addressing homelessness in our state, yet when the time comes to step up and take real action on homelessness and affordable housing, Republicans are nowhere to be found.”

LRB-3332 would increase the number of housing choice vouchers for low-income families, seniors, and disabled individuals by 6,600 per year, helping to alleviate long waiting lists for rent assistance.

LRB-3305 would create an eviction-prevention program funded and administered by WHEDA. The program would provide assistance to keep families and individuals at risk of homelessness in their housing when a temporary financial crisis arises.

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LRB-3306 would increase funds available for housing grants by \$2.5 million to fund Rapid Rehousing and Housing First programs that have been proven effective in keeping formerly homeless people in permanent housing.

LRB-3331 would expand the availability of case management services to increase housing stability for formerly homeless families and individuals receiving housing vouchers

LRB-3330 directs WHEDA to study the use of social impact bonding and other mechanisms to fund the development of new affordable housing. The study must be completed by January 31, 2018 and should identify ways to increase the state's supply of affordable housing stock.

Copies of the bills are attached.

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