

10/17/2007 - Sires Cosponsors Bill To End Homelessness Among Veterans

Staggering statistics of homeless veterans makes this legislation a top priority

For Immediate Release

Contact: Olga Alvarez

October 17, 2007

(201) 222-2828

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Albio Sires has added his name to the list of representatives that want to eradicate homelessness among our veteran population. Sires has become a cosponsor of the Homes For Heroes Act of 2007, a bill sponsored by Rep. Al Green of Texas, and Rep. Michael Michaud of Maine, that will provide shelter to veteran's and their families, as well as prevent others on the verge of becoming homeless to loose what could be their most prized possession. Currently, there are 200,000 homeless veterans living in the United States.

"Housing is one of my top priorities in Congress and to learn the staggering statistics of veteran homelessness simply hurts," said Congressman Sires. "The men and women who have put their lives on the line for our country must be taken care of, and we need to take the necessary steps so that they can have a roof over their heads and can provide shelter for their families."

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, out of the 800,000 homeless that exist in the United States, 23 percent are veterans. Nearly 400,000 veterans can become homeless during a year, and in the absence of permanent housing solutions and supportive services, many low-income veterans and their families are at risk of becoming homeless. Over 600,000 veterans have incomes below 50 percent of the poverty line. One-point-five million live in poverty.

H.R. 3329, the Homes For Heroes Act, would provide shelter for homeless veterans and homeless veteran families, as well as prevent low-income families from falling into homelessness. Provisions include: the appointment of a liaison within HUD to work with state and local officials, non-profit organizations and the Department of Veterans Affairs to coordinate services; a \$200 million assistance program for housing of low-income veterans; and the authorization of \$1 million in HUD grants to service provides that assist veterans in obtaining permanent housing or homeless assistance.

"It's time to rearrange our priorities and take care of our own first. I am concerned that our veterans, particularly that the one-in-five with mental health problems, could end up living on the streets. I support this bill, that will rescue our veterans and their families and help them live healthy, productive lives," said Congressman Sires.

(####)