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December 14, 2015

The Honorable Julián Castro
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
820 First St NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Secretary Castro,

I write to echo the sentiments of Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine in their letter dated discussing the state of emergency that was recently declared in response to the homelessness crisis in the Seattle and King County, Washington area. I strongly support their invitation for you to visit the Seattle area for discussions about and action to address this important matter.

In recent weeks, the City of Seattle and King County have declared a state of emergency to address the area's homelessness crisis. The reasons underlying the crisis are many and it is an issue that no local government can solve alone. King County and the City of Seattle have been working in strong partnership together with regional partners and non-profit service providers to maximize funding for homeless services. However, despite those strong partnerships, this human crisis persists.

The 2015 One Night Count found that 3,772 individuals were living outside and unsheltered in King County, an increase of 21 percent from 2014. The majority of these individuals are in the City of Seattle, which constitutes part of the district I represent. The state now reports that 35,000 people in King County become newly homeless at some point during the year. There are also 32,000 homeless children in Washington state, with nearly 3,000 homeless children currently attending Seattle Public Schools.

By declaring a state of emergency on homelessness, King County and the City of Seattle can have more administrative authority and flexibility in contracting for services and allocating resources in response to the homelessness crisis. In addition, the City of Seattle will invest new one-time funding for homelessness crisis intervention and prevention services.

Seattle and King County cannot address the homelessness crisis alone, which is why the emergency orders call on a recommitment from state and federal partners to provide immediate assistance in this time of crisis. The City and County are asking that the federal government extend and increase its support to provide both short and long-term assistance to help combat the issue. As such, I join the Mayor of Seattle in inviting you to see firsthand the crisis we are facing and to meet with local leaders to discuss what actions can be taken at the Federal level or by Congress to make an impact.

Local and regional efforts alone are only part of the solution to address the growing crisis of homelessness in our cities. The federal government plays a role in identifying solutions to provide relief

to our local government partners. It is my hope that you are able to visit Seattle and that we can work together to stop the rise of homelessness in King County and around the country.

Again, thank you for your attention to this matter. I urge you to give King County Executive Constantine and Mayor Murray's request your full and fair consideration, in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam Smith". The signature is stylized with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Adam Smith
Member of Congress