



Committee on Health and Human Services  
April 24, 2015 (**Speaker #1**)

My name is ..... I am here today to speak on behalf of Good Faith Communities Coalition to voice our support for the proposed \$12.7 million new investment in homeless services.

Good Faith was founded five years ago as a voice of District faith congregations concerned about our neighbors who are poor and marginalized. In 2015 close to 45 congregations of all denominations signed a Covenant committing themselves "to actively support public efforts and programs to provide temporary and permanent affordable housing for all in need." The \$12.7 million new investment in homeless services will provide the targeted assistance people need to exit homelessness and establish sustainable independence. It is a program investment that the community can and must support.

The human cost of homelessness that the city is now experiencing is compelling. Roughly one-third of DC children receive some kind of benefits. The shelter system is inadequate to the need. DC General should close now, but no alternatives are currently available. Rapid Re-housing is too often a one-size-fits-all solution for a population whose needs are complex and varied. Uncoordinated programs that don't substantially improve conditions for families or individuals continue.

The trend of barely adequate programs providing barely adequate service will not reverse on its own, nor will the solutions be cheap or short term. Our greatest hope is timely support and implementation of the Inter-agency Council on Homelessness *Strategic Plan to End Homelessness*. The plan builds on the current system with best practices, is data driven, looks at "cost to outcome" factors, admits what it does not yet know and seeks solutions. We can't allow the opportunities this realistic roadmap promises for real progress slip away.

And yes, a successful program to manage homelessness and give everyone opportunity will require more money, a lot more money. We must look at the added expense as an investment in the future of our community, an investment to make the community whole.

As faith communities we honor and embrace all people in our community as children of God. We are hopeful people. This plan gives us hope for our neighbors who are poor. **We can and must invest in the ICH Plan this year.**

Thank you for listening; we look forward to your leadership in making homeless services a PRIORITY.

Note: Statistics from *What is in the Proposed FY 2016 Budget for Homeless Services?* DCFPI Toolkit, 2015.