



Memo in Support of A1620 and S2375

A1620 Sponsor: Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi

S2375 Sponsor: Senator Liz Krueger

Care for the Homeless has endorsed and is actively advocating for the “Home Stability Support” legislation that promises to modernize the state’s rental subsidy allowance program. The state’s shelter allowance program was originally created in 1975 to pay the full amount of family rent for eligible households on public assistance. But it has not kept up with the rising cost of rents and has not been adjusted in many years. Currently 171,000 households receive an allowance in the program, but more than two-thirds have rents that exceed the allowance – in many cases by large percentages.

As an example, the current allowance for a family of three ranges from \$264 to \$447, depending on location, whether heat is included and other issues. Yet, the 2020 HUD Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in New York City is \$1,951 a month. And studies show that 60% of New Yorkers don’t have enough emergency savings to cover their rent and living expenses in the event of the loss of employment, medical or other emergency.

The Home Stability Support legislation seeks to keep households receiving public assistance in their homes and prevent homelessness. The bill would create a State supplement that would bridge the difference between the current shelter allowance and up to 85% of the federally established community fair market rents.

Current Social Services Law already requires the state provide “adequate” allowances for a family to appropriately provide for children, and “...provide for the support, maintenance and needs...” of parents, children and the home. In fact, a 1990 state court decision (*Jiggetts v. Grinker*, 75 NY 2d 411) found that “a schedule establishing assistance levels so low that it forces large numbers of families with dependent children into homelessness does not meet the statutory standard.”

So a modern shelter allowance for families on public assistance is both the right thing to do, and required by current state law.

Care For the Homeless strongly favors this legislation and urges its adoption.

For additional information, please contact George Nashak, Executive Director of Care For the Homeless at 212-366-4459.