S. 3788. A bill to address the homelessness and housing crises, to move toward the goal of providing for a home for all Americans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the Housing Act for All Act of 2022, which I introduced today.

The homelessness and housing crises have worsened in recent years. As of January 2020, more than 580,000 individuals in the country, disproportionately people of color, were experiencing homelessness. Rates of unsheltered homelessness have increased over the last few years, and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness have a mortality rate four to nine times higher than that of the general public. A lack of affordable housing and housing assistance programs have contributed to homelessness. There is a shortage of 6.8 million affordable rental homes in the United States. Even before the pandemic, one in four renters spent half of their monthly income on rent, and nearly a million tenants were evicted each year. I believe every person has a right to housing.

That is why I am proud to introduce this bill, which represents a comprehensive approach to tackling housing and homelessness. If enacted, it would invest in and align Federal resources to support those experiencing housing instability. To address the homelessness and housing crises, we must invest in policies that support strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and ensure quality affordable homes for all.

Specifically, this bill will address the affordable housing shortage by investing in the housing trust fund, the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program, and the HOME Program. It establishes a Commission to focus on racial equity in housing and homelessness.

It will address homelessness by investing in housing choice vouchers project-based rental assistance, emergency solutions grants, and continuums of care. It will create grant programs to strengthen mobile crisis intervention teams; to support hotel and motel conversions to permanent supportive housing with services; to aid libraries in supporting persons experiencing homelessness; and to provide people living in vehicles with a safe place to park overnight and facilitate a transition to stable housing. And it commissions a report on the connection between evictions and emergency rental assistance during the pandemic, so we can make smarter policy moving forward.

When I have traveled around the State—from LA County to Inland Empire, to Fresno, to San Diego, to San Francisco—to get a sense of the needs for housing in different communities, some key elements stood out. On the production side, there is a need for more dedicated funding for affordable housing from the Federal Government. There is also missing middle housing for families, especially people of color. And there is not enough housing near transit. That is why my bill focuses on supporting inclusive, transit-oriented development. When I talked to researchers about keeping families housed, one main point they made is that we don't have enough data on renters and evictions, and that is why I wanted to include a section of the bill on data—so we can make evidence-based policies. Right now, the cost to build low-income housing in California is very high because of land and material costs as well as the fragmented way that funding gets doled out in California. That is why I included a section to provide technical assistance for localities navigating Federal and State housing funding sources.

The COVID–19 pandemic has underscored the need for affordable, safe, and supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness. Because of the pandemic, many lost their housing, while others struggled to make rent for the first time. Some didn't know where to turn as shelters faced capacity limits and food banks saw overwhelming demand. These hardships were especially prevalent for those who had already been marginalized—including communities of color, low-income communities, and those with disabilities.

As we begin to recover from the pandemic, it is our job to rebuild a more inclusive and equitable world for all. A just recovery includes expanding affordable housing options to provide people with a sense of stability. It also means respecting the dignity and supporting the health of all community members. Affordable housing is essential infrastructure. Every person deserves dignity, security, and space of their own.

I want to thank Representatives LIEU and CARBAJAL for introducing this bill with me, and I hope our colleagues will join us in support of this solution to our housing and homelessness crises.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 538—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR A SECOND UNITED STATES-AFRICA LEADERS SUMMIT AS AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND AFRICAN PARTNERS AND BUILD ON AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 538

Whereas meaningful and consistent high-level multilateral engagement between the United States and Africa is necessary for the foreign policy of the United States to keep pace with the rapid transformation and demographic shifts in Africa and to ensure that the United States understands and responds to the dynamism and ambitions of its African partners;

Whereas successive United States' Presidential administrations and Congress have identified strategic competition with the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and other malign actors as a threat to the national security priorities of the United States that requires building and maintaining networks of bilateral and multilateral partners and allies, including countries in Africa;

Whereas the People's Republic of China, the European Union, India, Japan, the Russian Federation, and Turkey, among others, have held high-level summits with African leaders to discuss policy priorities and deepen economic, political, and security partnerships;

Whereas, during August 4 through 6, 2014, President Barack Obama hosted the first and only United States-Africa Leaders Summit (referred to in this preamble as the ''2014 Summit'') in Washington, D.C., with African leaders representing 50 countries, the African Union Commission, and various private sector and civil society leaders under the theme ''Investing in the Next Generation'';

Whereas the 2014 Summit provided a forum for African leaders to engage in frank exchanges with the Government of the United States and congressional leaders, business executives, and members of civil society regarding—

(1) development and economic challenges;

(2) trade, investment, and economic cooperation;

(3) democracy, human rights, and governance; and

(4) peace and regional security;

Whereas, on February 5, 2021, at the 34th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., outlined the vision of his administration for a United States-Africa partnership to strengthen relationships and build on mutual interests and respect with the governments, people (including people of the African Diaspora), and regional multilateral institutions of Africa;

Whereas, on November 19, 2021, during a speech to the Economic Community of West African States in Abuja, Nigeria, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the United States would host a second United States-Africa Leaders Summit ''to drive the kind of high-level diplomacy and engagement that can transform relationships and make effective cooperation possible''; and

Whereas a well-organized and resourced second United States-Africa Leaders Summit, with an established mechanism for continuity and follow-up, will create a platform upon which the United States and African partners can better structure United States-Africa relationships, deliver on commitments, solve problems, and work together as partners on areas of mutual interest: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the administration of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., hosting a second United States-Africa Leaders Summit (referred to in this resolution as the ''Summit'') as a vital opportunity to strengthen ties between the United States and African partners;

(2) underscores the importance of bipartisan, bicameral congressional participation in the Summit;

(3) commits to working with the heads of state, civil society, private sector, and the African Diaspora to build stronger ties with the United States and pursue mutual interests; and