

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Monique Noel

**Date Submitted:** 02/25/2021 10:48 AM

**Council File No:** 20-0113

**Comments for Public Posting:** Despite official acknowledgments that systemic racism is driving homelessness, Black people continue to be over represented on the streets of Skid Row — and most importantly, people are still dying from lack of housing. A year after the pandemic brought our city to a standstill, very little has been done to end homelessness, protect our community and save the lives of the most vulnerable Angelenos. Acknowledging the disproportionate number of Black women in Skid Row and the dangers unhoused women face, the Mayor pledged to house 100 women via Project 100, which launched in October 2019. Nearly a year-and-a-half later, on Feb. 10, 2021 he realized this number was too small and declared an expansion of project Roomkey — 300 more rooms, 150 of which would go to unhoused women in Skid Row. In this time, the number of unhoused women in Skid Row has skyrocketed from 1,072 to around 1,500. Clearly, 150 rooms to address a growing problem created by structural racism is not enough. Women, non-binary and transgender communities in particular are at an increased risk of harm. State violence, sexual assault, having their children taken and survival transactions are facts of life for women who lack housing. Shorter life expectancy and rising mortality rates are the only definite outcomes for women currently living on the streets of Skid Row. Women's safety is only enhanced by being housed. Place women in dignified housing/hotels immediately, tents and shelters are not a solution. Supportive services must be made readily available for the women to access during their stay; and, most importantly, permanent housing must be secured, women must not be placed back on the street. The Biden administration committed to reimbursing 100% of the cost of Project Roomkey through FEMA. Funding clearly isn't an issue. Administrative Code (LAAC) Section 8.29 designates the mayor to be the Director of the Emergency Operations Organization. The mayor is authorized to commandeer private property as is needed for the protection of the people. There are 70,000 empty hotel rooms in Los Angeles. The mayor can seize hotel and motel rooms for use as homeless housing during the pandemic. Why has this not been done? People should not be forced to sleep on the sidewalk unnecessarily? Seize the hotel rooms and make them available to unhoused Skid Row residents now. Utilize every hotel room adjacent to Skid Row to

house women in need. The federal government has guaranteed a 100% reimbursement for these purposes and Black women must benefit from this commitment. It is the only way to get the number of units and amenities that our community deserves. Women placed in Project Roomkey must be able to stay in place and be prioritized in the transition to permanent housing. Only 15% of the 15,000 who left shelter in November 2020 received permanent housing. When the FEMA money expires, Black women must not be evicted from their rooms or offered options on the other side of the county. Ensure monies are directed to community organizers/residents who are doing the work of identifying the most vulnerable women, bypassing the now publicly acknowledged anti-Black CES (Coordinated Entry System). The Downtown Women's Action Coalition, for example, have provided a safety net for women during this pandemic and have assisted in identifying, transporting, and transitioning women into housing. This is real work, and needs to be compensated. Mayor Garcetti continues to say Black Lives Matter all the while Black people perish on the streets of Los Angeles at four times the rate of everyone else. This condition is a direct result of structural and institutional racism and the failure to correct the causal chain of discrimination that segregates, displaces, criminalizes and locks Black people out of access to housing. It is time to do what's right. Prioritize the needs of Black women. Prioritize their safety and their health. House women now.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Silvia HERNANDEZ

**Date Submitted:** 02/24/2021 11:03 AM

**Council File No:** 20-0113

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