

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: I am urging the homelessness and poverty committee to decriminalize homelessness, in part by defunding the police and decreasing the interactions between our unhoused populations and the police. Many unhoused people face mental health difficulties, the uncertainty of homelessness and lack of access to healthcare creates immense mental stress. We need trained mental health professionals, not police, to be dispatched in the case of mental health emergencies. We must also eliminate all CARE+ sweeps which are not only inhumane and cruel, but conducted by the police (and can result in medications being thrown away). Police harassment and incarceration only exacerbate mental health disorders. We can not continue to subject our unhoused neighbors, who are among the most vulnerable, to this type of treatment. Furthermore, these emergency mental health services will only be effective if accompanied by ongoing mental health services. The call to defunding the police is not only about minimizing policing and incarceration, but investing in community care. One crucial aspect of the community care LA needs is homelessness services, including both emergency and non-emergency mental health services.