



**COUNCILMEMBER JENNIFER CAMPBELL  
COUNCIL DISTRICT TWO**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 19, 2022**

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**Councilmembers Campbell and von Wilpert to Include a \$500k Funding Request for New Conservatorship and Treatment Unit in Their May Budget Revision Memos to Tackle San Diego’s Most Vexing Homelessness Cases**

*The unit will be within the City Attorney’s office and will help secure medical treatment and housing for vulnerable San Diegans who are experiencing severe behavioral health issues and homelessness*

SAN DIEGO – After advocating for funding in the amount of \$500,000 for a Conservatorship and Treatment Unit at every opportunity during the Budget Review Committee process, Councilmembers Campbell and von Wilpert will be including this request in their May Revision Budget Memos. Allocating \$500,000 to fund a new homelessness focused Conservatorship and Treatment Unit will help find housing and treatment programs for unsheltered individuals who are unable to care for their own needs, and who have no family or friends to look out for them.

The City Council has completed its annual Budget Review Committee hearings and next, the Mayor will release his May Revision of the budget. Councilmembers will now submit May Revision Memos to the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst for final consideration.

**“People who cannot help themselves shouldn’t be left vulnerable to the dangers of life on the streets and leaving those with physical and mental conditions that warrant intervention on the streets is not compassion,”** Councilmember Jennifer Campbell said. **“Without help these folks have the most trouble navigating social services and our medical system and State law requires a plan for the individual’s housing and treatment needs that must be developed and executed so these people will be taken care of.**

Importantly, removing these folks from the larger homeless population allows all homeless service dollars to go further. These individuals soak up so much resources. In fact, the City Attorney’s Office made Councilmember Campbell aware of one individual who had more than 500 contacts with emergency service personnel in a 12-month

period, including 109 contacts in just one month. This effort will increase staff bandwidth, not just homeless service dollars.

These funds will be used to prioritize treatment and housing placements for those individuals experiencing homelessness whose severe struggles with mental illness lead to the most frequent calls on City emergency services, including paramedics and the police department. The effort will also help to provide for basic daily needs such as medical care, food, clothing, and shelter.

The new Conservatorship and Treatment Unit will consist of three new positions that expand the capacity of the Lifesaving Intervention for Treatment (LIFT) Program under City Attorney Mara W. Elliott. A newly hired Person-Centered Treatment Coordinator will assess the individuals' histories and refer them to Assisted Outpatient Treatment, the Serial Inebriate Program, or other pathways to treatment, including court appointment of the county Public Guardian as their conservator. Two Deputy City Attorneys will coordinate with the offices of the Public Guardian and Public Conservator, make referrals and file conservatorship petitions with the court.

Conservatorships are a compassionate way to meet the health, safety, and psychological needs of individuals who cannot care for themselves and have no one else to look out for them. Many rely on emergency medical services to survive. Many are gravely mentally ill. Some are developmentally disabled adults whose needs are greater than their families can provide. Many are elderly. All are unable to provide for their own health care, nutrition, clothing, and shelter.

**“Together with the City Attorney’s Office, we’re acting now to prevent San Diego’s most vulnerable residents from cycling through our emergency rooms and get them the help they need,”** Councilmember Marni von Wilpert said. **“While ensuring due process rights for all residents, conservatorships are a humanitarian tool to help those who cannot help themselves, many of whom are living on our streets.”**

Governor Gavin Newsom and State lawmakers are working to expand the state’s conservatorship laws to include more homeless individuals with severe mental illness. Discussions are centered around creating mental health ‘Care Courts’ in every California county to allow for treatment for more homeless individuals with severe mental health and addiction disorders and potentially compelling some of them into care.

Councilmembers Campbell and von Wilpert say their proposal would be effective under existing state conservatorship laws, while also preparing the City of San Diego to step up its efforts to spur court-ordered mental health treatment if Governor Newsom’s Care Court proposal is adopted.

Since 2020, the City Attorney’s Office has used existing law to bring the most tragic cases to the attention of the Public Guardian and has itself petitioned the court in particularly urgent instances. As the medical and emergency-services communities have seen the Office’s commitment to compassionate conservatorships, the number of referrals to the City Attorney’s Office has skyrocketed.

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