



**THE HONORABLE SHENG THAO • MAYOR OF OAKLAND**

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January 18, 2023

The White House  
Office of the Vice President  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Harris,

It is with deep appreciation that I reach out to you, as a fellow Oaklander. Thank you for your service to our communities across the country, and your dedication to tackling key issues surrounding economic opportunity and health equity over the last several years.

I am reaching out to you requesting your support. Amidst a global pandemic that has exacerbated existing inequities and strained public health systems across the country, homelessness has emerged as one of the top priorities of your administration. And rightly so, as our communities are suffering.

For me, the homelessness crisis is deeply personal. As you may know, I am the daughter of Hmong refugees who fled genocide in Laos during the Vietnam War. As one of ten children, my parents encountered numerous economic and social challenges in the United States, and relied on social services, such as public housing, to get by. Raising my son, Benedict, as a single mother and survivor of domestic violence as we slept in a car on the street was a reality that has informed my current drive to develop an innovative and bold approach to reducing homelessness across our beautiful City of Oakland, CA. But we need your help.

As you know, in December 2022, the White House and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness released a comprehensive “All In” plan for reducing and preventing homelessness by 25% by 2025. I believe that the City of Oakland is not just in great need of the federal government’s assistance through this initiative but is also well-suited to be one of the cities and counties who will participate in the initial stages of the plan this year.

***Why Oakland?***

- We have an urgent need for homelessness prevention strategies and support from the federal government.

- In 2022, the City of Oakland was ranked among the top 10 cities in the United States with the most people experiencing homelessness.
- In 2022, over half (52%) of all sheltered and unsheltered individuals in Alameda County, one of the largest counties in California, resided in Oakland.
- There has been a 131% increase in homelessness within Oakland between 2015-2022.
- The City of Oakland drives economic opportunity, not just for thousands of Oaklanders, but for millions of people across the country.
  - Oakland is a major international cargo and transportation hub of the United States.
  - Oakland is home to major healthcare entities (ex. Kaiser Permanente) that deliver essential services and care to individuals across the Western region—when we fail to reduce homelessness in Oakland, we strain our healthcare system.

### ***Why Now?***

- Over the last several years, I have worked on several affordable housing initiatives in the City of Oakland, and now as its Mayor, I have an unparalleled opportunity to drive meaningful change across the City. And intend to do so.
  - We have a track record of excellence, and commitment to developing climate-smart and affordable housing.
    - In 2022, the city of Oakland was declared one of just seven jurisdictions out of 539 cities and counties in the state to receive a pro-housing designation.
  - We are goal oriented: I am committed to generating 30,000 additional affordable housing units over the next eight years.

My administration, and our community, are eager to work alongside you to reduce and end homelessness, and we believe that the City of Oakland is the perfect candidate to start with. I would greatly appreciate your consideration for the inclusion of Oakland, CA in the 2023 “All In” initiative.

Sincerely,



Mayor Sheng Thao  
City of Oakland