

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
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Teresa Leger de Fernandez  
Vice Chairman

John M. Fowler  
Executive Director



*Preserving America's Heritage*

November 30, 2015

The Honorable John Hardy Isakson  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building, SR-412  
Washington, DC 20510-6375

The Honorable Richard "Dick" Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building, SR-412  
Washington, DC 20510-6375

Dear Chairman Isakson and Senator Blumenthal:

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) wishes to express its support for the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act (S. 2013/H.R. 3484). Established by the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.), the ACHP is the independent federal agency charged with advising the President and Congress on historic preservation matters.

The West Los Angeles Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Campus, the subject of the bill, was established in 1888 as the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and still retains many historic properties, including two historic districts. The Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act would assist in preserving VA's underutilized historic properties in Los Angeles by expanding the department's ability to use Enhanced Use Leases (EULs) for a range of services that benefit veterans in addition to supportive housing for veterans that are at risk of homelessness or are homeless. Since leasing can be an efficient and cost-effective tool for preserving underutilized historic buildings, the ACHP voted unanimously at its recent business meeting to support the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act. The VA is a member of the ACHP and expressed its support for the bill.

The challenges that VA faces in preserving and reusing its historic properties extend far beyond Los Angeles, however. VA has more than 2,000 historic buildings and landscapes, including a number of National Historic Landmarks, in its nationwide portfolio. In 2013, the National Trust for Historic Preservation issued a report, [Honoring Our Nation's Veterans: Saving Their Places of Health Care and Healing](#), which examined in detail the challenges and opportunities these historic properties pose for VA. The report discussed EULs as a tool for preservation of underutilized and unused VA historic properties and concluded that the restriction of EULs to only supportive housing reduces the usefulness of EULs as a tool for repurposing properties. The report recommended expanding the range of veteran-related services that might be provided through EULs. The ACHP requests that Congress consider expanding EUL authority at all VA facilities so that all of VA's historic properties might benefit from the opportunities broader leasing authority could provide.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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If you have any questions, or if the ACHP can be of any assistance, please contact the ACHP's Executive Director, John M. Fowler, at [jfowler@achp.gov](mailto:jfowler@achp.gov) or 202-517-0200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Milford Wayne Donaldson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "W".

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
Chairman