

Sacramento Opens Public Bathrooms for Homeless People

Offering the city's homeless some much needed relief.

The Huffington Post, by Elyse Wahshel, Associate Editor, Good News, 06/30/2016



KCRA News

This is a vital pit stop.

Sacramento, California, has launched “The Pit Stop” a six-month pilot program, which provides public restrooms for people who are homeless.

The facility will be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The unit has three air-conditioned stalls with sinks and one of which is ADA compliant. Attendants will be on site during open hours to ensure cleanliness and the bathrooms will also serve as a dog waste and needle collection site.



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For Pit Stop's June 20 debut, the stalls were decked out with vases filled with fake flowers and aromatic air fresher.



KCRA News

It's a welcome addition for the capital city's homeless population who have had a difficult time finding a place to use the restroom.

"You can't go to the bathroom because you have to buy something to go to the bathroom. If you don't have the money, then you can't use their bathroom," Carol Mack, who is homeless, told KCRA News.

Lonnie Morning, who is also homeless, shed some light on the disparity of the issue: "A lot of people go on the sidewalk and in the street. It's disgusting," he told The Sacramento Bee. "It's not because they want to be disgusting. It's because there is nowhere to go."



Council member Jeff Harris

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Council member Jeff Harris is the man responsible for pressing Sacramento City Council for the \$100,000 budget to fund the six-month program in the River District neighborhood, which hosts a neighborhood that hosts a significant homeless population. Harris admits that at first local businesses didn't want the program to launch out of fear that the restrooms would attract even more homeless individuals. But Harris insisted that the facility was necessary.

"You have to change," Harris told KCRA News. "You have to do something to start changing. Our status quo gets worse year by year and this is our first baby step."

He also added to The Sacramento Bee:

"This is really a social project to affect positive change for the homeless community and the business community. If you have to relieve yourself and you have to do it on the street you lose dignity, so there is a compassion piece and a practical piece ... so this bathroom addressed both."