

A new response to homelessness

As any well-informed resident should know, the issue of homelessness in Butte County is abundant and nuanced. Somewhere between spirited (and at times violent) efforts to



by
Liv Jolley

The author is a program coordinator for Safe Space Chico who has been a Butte County resident for 14 years and has seen a growing need for come-as-you-are public aide and approachable services.

remove Chico's homeless from public parks and spaces and the launching of programs and facilities dedicated to helping move individuals and families into stable housing, there is a common understanding that the problem needs to be addressed. A salient piece of legislation moving through the California legislature aims to provide long-term sustainability for efforts to reaching homelessness and housing goals.

As a provider of homeless services in Butte County, I have found that the gaps in our continuum are at times unnavigable. While access to shelter

and supportive housing is extremely limited, this is just the surface of the forces working to keep individuals outside. Earth-shattering Adverse Childhood Experiences scores and opioid use rates coupled with limited mental health and substance use treatment create barriers far higher than any shelter's admission requirements.

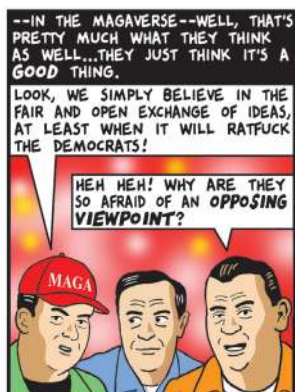
AB-799 (aka the Homelessness Accountability and Results Act) suggests a promising shift toward change. This would be done through ongoing grant funds allocated for service provision, expansion, and development of capacity at every level aimed at addressing immediate barriers to improving rates of homelessness. Access to the funds would require participation in a council formed between agencies on the continuum as well as clearly defined goals and actions and proof of progress toward these goals. These actions must be informed by research and data, reflecting effective service delivery and best practices. This bill provides accountability across all levels of government and a framework for progress.

In the meantime, there is much to be done

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BY TOM TOMORROW



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