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### **Supervisor Desmond's Statement on San Diego's Homeless Population Increasing By 22%**

Homelessness continues to soar in San Diego County, with a staggering 22% rise within the past year. Last weekend, I went to a Padres game and saw rows and rows of tents lining downtown streets and overpasses. We are better than this, but failed policies persist while the State remains locked into the singular ineffective tool of Housing First. Let's tackle the root cause: mental health.

North County San Diego is focused on behavioral health services:

- Crisis Stabilization Units along SR-78 in Oceanside, Vista, and Escondido.
- \$20M from the County for psychiatric beds at Tri-City Medical Center.
- One Safe Place in San Marcos, aiding women and families facing domestic violence, trafficking, and elder abuse.

To combat homelessness effectively, the State must ditch its one-size-fits-all Housing First approach. Until then, billions more of taxpayer dollars will be wasted.

If this approach truly worked, we would be witnessing declining homelessness rates. However, the reality is that homelessness continues to rise, despite the State of California already squandering over \$10 billion on "homeless solutions" in just the past three years. Housing First is a failed formula, burdening our communities with disastrous results.

The focus should be on providing mental health services. We must address the root causes of homelessness. Taxpayers deserve accountability for the exorbitant amount of money being spent, and they are rightfully tired of witnessing the homeless problem persist and grow.