



COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

October 4, 2025

Commission Streamlining Taskforce
Ed Harrington, Chair
Andrea Bruss
Sophie Hayward
Natasha Mihal
Sophia Kittler

Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force,

The Shelter Monitoring Committee was created to ensure that shelters followed the standards of care established via legislation by then Supervisor Tom Ammianno. Shelters are large facilities that house vulnerable people and unlike any other institutions in the state, have no licensing requirements. At the time the legislation was passed, many shelters did not have toilet paper, no soap to wash hands, and mats were piled right next to each other. Sleeping mats, mattresses and pillows had no coverings to protect against skin born infections. From a communicable disease perspective, this was a major problem. In addition, many shelter residents didn't have drinking water, or blankets. All of this changed with the implementation of the shelter monitoring committee, indicating the clear necessity of having a body independent of the Executive Branch, to help the Executive Branch meet its goals.

There are 32 shelter standards today for 50 shelters, and without monitoring, many shelters would not be following the standards. The body does announced and unannounced visits to shelters, takes and investigates complaints and ensures that the standards are followed. Some complaints are more serious such as sexual exploitation of clients by staff, while others are minor but important such as not stocking toilet paper. But all the standards are incredibly important to the people living in shelter.

Shelters are not easy places to live, but at the very least the Shelter Monitoring Committee is taking a look and making sure basic standards are intact.

It is completely unreasonable that the HOC conduct unannounced and unannounced visits, take and investigate complaints, and focus in on this important work. They simply do not have the capacity to do all this work. We recommend the continuation of this critical advisory body- an excellent example of participatory democracy and one of many innovations that encapsulate the soul of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JFR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jennifer Friedenbach
Executive Director