

A NEW WAR ON POVERTY

WHEREAS, January 8, 2014 will be the 50th Anniversary of President Lyndon B. Johnson's State of the Union Address where he declared a War on Poverty in America;

WHEREAS, President Johnson pledged to build "a nation free from want" and declared that "we shall not rest until the war is won";

WHEREAS, the War on Poverty instituted more than a dozen government programs designed to lift families out of poverty, including the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, Medicaid, Medicare, Head Start, expanded Food Stamps, and the Higher Education Act;

WHEREAS, many programs of the War on Poverty were successful in helping lift millions of impoverished families into the middle class;

WHEREAS, the rate of persistent poverty in the United States is currently higher than in 1964 when President Johnson declared the War on Poverty;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau, taking into account new factors that include cost of living, estimates that 16% of Americans live in poverty in 2013;

WHEREAS, California currently has the highest poverty rate in the nation at 23.8% and there are 50 neighborhoods in Alameda County with overall poverty rates that exceed 25%;

WHEREAS, there are 15 neighborhoods in Alameda County with child poverty rates above 50% and another 36 neighborhoods where the child poverty rate exceeds 32%;

WHEREAS, many lessons have been learned during the past 50 years that will help guide the next campaign to end poverty in America; and

WHEREAS, a new campaign must rely on proven strategies that combine the best elements of self-reliance, community engagement and government support while deploying the latest technology to engage the entire community in this effort;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Board of Supervisors, County of Alameda, declares a New War on Poverty on the 50th Anniversary of President Johnson's first War on Poverty;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board of Supervisors calls upon the California State Senate Office of Research to study the impact of poverty in California and suggest strategies to make a difference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board of Supervisors creates a blueprint for change that relies on research-based strategies to eradicate poverty in Alameda County.