



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor: How the Biden administration can save itself embarrassment over homeless veterans



A homeless veteran sweeps outside his tent, draped with a U.S. flag, near the VA campus in Westwood in 2021. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

June 4, 2024 3 AM PT

To the editor: I have worked for years to change U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs policy regarding homeless veterans in Los Angeles. So, I was thrilled to see Doug Smith's [thoughtful article on U.S. District Judge David O. Carter](#), whom Smith calls the closest official we have to a homelessness "czar."

I want to support Carter's smart suggestion that VA Secretary Denis McDonough come to Los Angeles in person to reach a settlement on existing litigation over housing homeless veterans. I know this could work, because it has before.

In 2015, then-VA Secretary Bob McDonald met me and colleagues to settle prior litigation. That settlement created significant positive benefits, including hundreds of housing units and a detailed, formal plan for a vibrant "town center" for the VA campus community in Westwood.

That type of negotiated settlement can happen again now. But without McDonough's personal intervention, this lawsuit will go to trial this summer. The courtroom and the country will see exhibits and hear testimony on the Biden administration's failure to build the thriving community necessary to stop veteran suffering.

I hope McDonough will follow his predecessor's smart example and enter settlement discussions soon.

Bobby Shriver, Santa Monica

The writer was a member of the Santa Monica City Council from 2004-12.

