Cities of Hope

Solving the Homelessness

Jobs + Housing = Hope

By
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Introduction

Homelessness is a deeply rooted issue that has persisted in the United States for decades, affecting every layer of society. It's a crisis that extends beyond the visible suffering we often see on the streets; it's a complex dilemma deeply entwined with economic inconsistencies and social disparities.

This book endeavors to offer practical solutions to homelessness by exploring various perspectives and innovative approaches. My goal is not merely to provide temporary relief but to develop sustainable communities that reintegrate the homeless into society, thereby stimulating economic growth and national well-being. This multi-faceted issue demands a concerted effort from all sectors of society, guided by comprehensive strategies and collaborative involvement.

In 2011, I began spending time in Washington, DC, working with Crowell & Moring law firm on a World Bank arbitration case representing my company. One day, while out for lunch with a few attorneys, I saw a homeless person with a broken arm. Concerned, I went outside and asked him what had happened. He told me he had been attacked at night, explaining that such attacks on people experiencing homelessness were becoming common, a cruel sport for some. Even today, I remember the fury I felt, unable to digest the fact that people could do this to others. Homeless people are our people; they are Americans. I hugged him and reassured him that God would care for him as He does for all Americans. When I turned around, I noticed the looks of surprise from the people around me, questioning how a suited-up man could be hugging a homeless person in the heart of Georgetown.

That night, I woke up around 3 am, worrying about the folks outside. I went out and walked the streets of Georgetown, close to the US Treasury, at the heart of DC. After about 10 minutes, I found a group of homeless individuals sleeping, around 8-9 of them. I stayed nearby without disturbing them for close to two hours. I was prepared to defend them, if necessary, even if it meant ending up in the hospital. Sometimes, protecting the innocent outweighs the consequences. This belief is a fundamental pillar of being a true American, a conviction that has guided me in my 30 years of geopolitical work, being an American by heart myself.

This routine continued for 10-12 days, becoming increasingly challenging. Working with the legal team during the day and patrolling the streets at night left me with little sleep. During this period, the idea of finding a solution began to take root. Over the years, whenever I was in the US, I engaged with homeless individuals, gaining valuable insights into their needs and how we can help them.

Some of my proposals you will read may seem odd or massive, but I am inspired by the great work of the US Army Corps of Engineers and the remarkable structures they have built. The US Military, ranked 19th globally in 1939, became Number 1 in just six years. I firmly believe in the American Dream and its

ability to create miracles when pushed to the brink. This belief has allowed the world to enjoy peace and prosperity for nearly 80 years.

My proposal to introduce over 50,000 foreign workers into these cities of hope is not just about meeting immediate labor needs. It is a strategic move aimed at creating a sustainable pipeline of skilled labor. By attracting qualified individuals from around the world, we can significantly enhance the inclusiveness of our workforce and lay the foundation for long-term socio-economic resilience. This emphasis on sustainability is a key aspect of the initiative.

Additionally, I am driven by the understanding that these foreign workers are motivated by a profound desire for a better life—a new beginning in America. The comprehensive package is designed to be globally competitive, ensuring that it appeals to a wide range of talent. I am confident that these individuals, in their quest for a brighter future, will demonstrate extraordinary commitment and adaptability, particularly during these towns' challenging initial stabilization phase. Their resilience will aid their integration and cultivate a culture of empathy and understanding towards our homeless population.

This initiative presents a unique opportunity for both sides: the foreign workers gain a fresh start and the chance to pursue the American Dream, while our homeless citizens are given the chance to reintegrate into society and reclaim their lives. This vision of mutual benefit is central to the broader narrative I aim to convey in this book.

My advocacy for establishing 100 Cities of Hope across the United States is not a random suggestion but a carefully planned initiative driven by a set of strategic objectives:

1. **Eradicate homelessness** by providing stable housing, employment, and community integration.
2. **Create vibrant towns across the U.S.** to spur economic growth and prosperity.
3. **Achieve inclusivity for homeless citizens** by reintegrating them into the economy with dignity, transforming the approach from charity to a mutually beneficial partnership where the benefits extend beyond initial support.
4. **Attract qualified foreign workers** through a novel visa program that co-finances the initiative and tackles stabilization challenges while these workers earn their new lives in America.
5. **Generate global goodwill** through the visa program, creating a positive perception of the U.S. and building a valuable database of skilled individuals eager to contribute to the nation's growth, particularly in the manufacturing sector.
6. **Accelerate the growth of U.S. manufacturing industries** by creating new jobs and fostering a self-sustaining economy that can thrive independently if needed.
7. **Expand and strengthen American cities** by transforming the Cities of Hope into thriving hubs that alleviate pressure on overcrowded urban centers, spreading opportunity across the nation.

8. **Foster national unity** by transcending political differences, with Cities of Hope symbolizing a united effort to embrace each other and work towards a shared future—whether Democrat or Republican, we are all part of the same nation.

These objectives form the backbone of my proposal, which aims to turn untapped potential into thriving communities while simultaneously addressing one of our time's most pressing social issues.

> One of the inherent challenges in founding new towns or cities is the classic dilemma of attracting both population and business activity. The absence of job opportunities deters people from relocating, while the lack of population discourages businesses from investing—creating a Catch-22 situation. However, this challenge is addressed head-on with the model I am proposing. By focusing on our homeless population—individuals in search of stability and a fresh start—, we can offer them an opportunity to relocate to these new towns, which will provide quality of life, healthcare, job opportunities, and more. These towns will present a compelling alternative for those seeking a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

Moreover, this concept simultaneously brings job opportunities to these areas. Combined with my proposed financial architecture, it creates a robust framework for establishing and growing new cities and towns. Over time, these towns will naturally evolve into thriving ecosystems as the growth of supply chain requirements and other economic factors will inevitably drive their expansion. This approach will lead to the flourishing of new cities and towns across the United States, enhancing interconnectivity, stimulating economic growth, and contributing to the long-term sustainability of the nation's demographic landscape.

Furthermore, the surge in homelessness can be traced back to the de-industrialization that began in the 1970s. Reversing this trend by reindustrializing may well prove to be the most effective solution to this pressing issue.

I am proposing the establishment of basic industries within these towns, ranging from textile production to electronic assembly. The economic framework of these towns will be further diversified by incorporating call centers, greenhouses, waste-to-energy and waste recycling projects, and food processing and frozen food manufacturing.

In addition to the industrial focus, I have carefully considered the social dimensions of these towns. For instance, they could provide catering services to local businesses and government offices, which could potentially evolve into a program for offering free lunches to students in nearby schools. This initiative could be developed in collaboration with federal and state governments, NGOs, and private enterprises, creating a comprehensive model that integrates both economic and social sustainability.

In essence, while the initial perception of these homelessness transformation towns may be that they are primarily designed to assist and support our homeless population, I am confident that the long-term benefits they will bring to the United States as a whole will far exceed the immediate advantages to the homeless community. **This proposal should not be seen merely as an act of charity towards our**

homeless population; instead, it is about giving them a second chance—an opportunity for them to contribute significantly to our nation.

These individuals will play a crucial role in revitalizing our country by fostering the development of vibrant new towns in currently underutilized areas, attracting qualified talent to the U.S., and generating substantial economic value through their efforts. Furthermore, their involvement in social initiatives, such as free lunch programs for school children and other community-driven projects, will offer additional societal benefits.

This approach not only dignifies the concept but also resonates deeply with American values. I am confident that our homeless citizens will embrace this opportunity and, in doing so, help drive the positive transformation of our society.

In the ensuing chapters, I will examine historical trends and current data to understand the scope of the country's homelessness. I will dissect the economic, social, and personal root causes—factors like mental health, addiction, and domestic violence—that push individuals into homelessness. By evaluating federal, state, and local policy responses and analyzing past solutions, I aim to outline a comprehensive strategy that addresses both immediate needs and long-term objectives.

A crucial part of my proposed plan involves creating self-sustaining communities, particularly through the innovative concept of industrial parks. By combining stable housing and employment opportunities, we can offer hope and a pathway to a better life for homeless individuals. Additional chapters will delve into the practicalities of planning, infrastructure, job training, housing strategies, and integrating community services, all designed to foster a supportive environment that uplifts its residents.

By leveraging policy recommendations, technological innovations, and collaborative efforts with existing programs, I seek to propose a transformative change if it is applicable in practice (I firmly believe so). I will emphasize measurement and accountability, utilizing key performance indicators and data collection methods to ensure our solutions are effective and adaptable.

Ultimately, this book isn't just about addressing homelessness; it's about creating a society where everyone can thrive. We can turn the page to a new chapter of inclusivity, economic vitality, and societal well-being.

My overall goal is to contribute humbly to the issue of homelessness, recognizing the immense efforts already made by tens of thousands of dedicated individuals. I seek to assist in the broader problem-solving process that engages Americans at the federal, state, and NGO levels. Many organizations are tirelessly addressing this challenge and achieving remarkable results. **I have no doubt these great patriots will solve this issue.** There is no limit to what Americans can achieve; this is my unwavering belief, rooted in firsthand observations.

I firmly believe in the American Miracle and the boundless potential of what Americans can achieve, as has been demonstrated for centuries for the betterment of humanity. Americans have reached this level of progress and prosperity through blood, sweat, and tears, with nothing coming easily, all while internalizing the challenges of other nations and striving to help in every possible way. As one example, out of thousands, during the Second World War, Luxembourg lost 5,700 heroes, while Americans lost

5470 in Luxembourg—almost the same number of people. This is a great nation because Americans are good people, and God always rewards the good ones. Homeless citizens are a vital part of this great nation; they are Americans, and no solution should be considered too challenging or difficult to pursue if we believe it will help them and address the issue effectively.

Although my proposed Cities of Hope concept may seem bold or massive, I firmly believe that this great nation can eradicate this chronic problem with the right approach and methods. The establishment of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness is extremely encouraging and gives me firm hope that this problem will be eradicated soon. **I just hope to add my small contribution to these efforts to support the collective mission**.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to **Timothy Keegan**, The President of the COH Foundation, for his unwavering support and inspiration throughout this journey. A special thank you goes to **Wells Hall** for his continuous support and encouragement and to my brother, **Clinton G. Bryan,** for the honor of writing the foreword for this book. My heartfelt thanks go to my sister, **Ayse Berna Erten**, for her invaluable editorial and research assistance and to my mother, **Birten Erten**, whose thoughtful conversations and constant encouragement have been the driving force behind my commitment to search for a solution to this critical issue.

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United We Stand:
A Vision for National Unity
Through the Cities of Hope

Introduction

In a nation as diverse as the United States, unity is not just an ideal but a necessity. The motto "**United we stand**" has long served as a guiding principle for America, reminding everyone that strength lies in the ability to come together despite our differences. This principle is particularly relevant as we confront one of the most pressing challenges of our time: homelessness. The Cities of Hope initiative embodies this spirit of unity, offering a transformative approach to addressing homelessness while fostering a renewed sense of national cohesion.

Bridging Political Divides

Homelessness does not discriminate between political affiliations. Whether one identifies as a Republican or a Democrat, the issue of homelessness impacts all communities, transcending party lines. The Cities of Hope are designed to unite people from all walks of life, united by the shared goal of providing opportunities and support to those who need it most. This initiative represents a rare opportunity to transcend the political divides that have often hindered progress, demonstrating that we are all on the same side when it comes to fundamental human dignity.

By actively involving citizens from across the political spectrum, the Cities of Hope can serve as a powerful example of how bipartisan collaboration can lead to meaningful change. These towns will be living embodiments of the belief that, although we may have different perspectives, we are ultimately united in our desire to build a better future for all Americans.

A Symbol of American Resilience

The Cities of Hope are more than just a solution to homelessness; they are a testament to the resilience and ingenuity that define the American spirit. **Throughout history, America has risen to meet its most significant challenges by coming together and embracing the values that have made this nation strong: compassion, hard work, and a commitment to justice**. The creation of these towns will demonstrate that, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges, we can forge a path forward that benefits everyone.

In these communities, homeless citizens will not be seen as burdens but as valuable members of society eager to contribute to the growth and prosperity of the nation. Their involvement in building and sustaining these towns will instill a deep sense of pride and accomplishment, reinforcing the idea that everyone deserves a second chance. This approach will not only help eradicate homelessness but will also strengthen the social fabric of our nation, creating a more inclusive and compassionate society.

The Role of Citizenship and Participation

One of the most powerful aspects of the Cities of Hope is their potential to foster a renewed sense of citizenship and participation among all Americans. In these towns, every resident, whether formerly homeless or not, will have the opportunity to contribute to the community's success. This shared responsibility will create a strong sense of ownership and belonging, encouraging residents to take pride in their town and in their country.

This initiative will also provide a platform for Americans to come together and engage in meaningful dialogue about the values that unite us. Through community meetings, public forums, and collaborative projects, residents of the Cities of Hope will have the chance to actively participate in shaping the future of their towns. This emphasis on civic engagement will help rebuild trust in our democratic institutions and remind us of collective action's power.

Fostering Unity Beyond the Cities

The impact of the Cities of Hope will extend far beyond the boundaries of these new towns. As these communities thrive and grow, they will serve as models of what can be achieved when we work together. The lessons learned and the successes achieved in these towns can be replicated across the country, fostering a renewed sense of unity and purpose nationwide.

Moreover, the Cities of Hope will demonstrate that the American dream is still within reach for everyone. By providing homeless citizens with the tools they need to succeed, these towns will show that you can achieve greatness with hard work, support, and determination no matter where you start in life. This message of hope and possibility will resonate across the nation, inspiring others to come together and work towards a brighter future for all.

Conclusion

"**United we stand**" is more than just a motto—**it is a Call to Action.** The Cities of Hope initiative embodies this call, offering a bold vision for a united and prosperous America. By bringing together people from all walks of life, these towns will demonstrate the power of unity in overcoming one of our nation’s most pressing challenges. Through collaboration, compassion, and a shared commitment to the common good, we can build a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. **The Cities of Hope are not just about eradicating homelessness—they are about reinforcing the foundation of our nation’s greatness: unity, resilience, and unwavering belief in the American dream**.

This initiative invites every American to be a part of this mission, to contribute to the creation of a society where everyone is valued and where the strength of our nation is reflected in the unity of its people. Together, we can turn the page to a new chapter of American history, one where unity is not just an ideal but a lived reality in communities across the nation.

Dedication

In Loving Memory of My Father, Ali Cengiz Erten / 1940-1995

This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Ali Cengiz Erten. A man of immense character and boundless generosity. He served his military service at JUSMMAT, where he had the privilege of working alongside American soldiers, whom he affectionately considered his brothers. His time at JUSMMAT Office of Defense Cooperation Turkey - Wikipedia nurtured a profound love for America, a country whose values and ideals he held in the highest regard.

It was my father who instilled in me a deep admiration for the United States and its principles. He constantly encouraged me to build my life on the foundation of American values and to strive for what this great nation stands for—freedom, bravery, continuous progress, and the pursuit of happiness.

His greatest dream was to establish a chain of food banks, reflecting his unwavering commitment to helping those in need. My father was always the person who would go the extra mile to assist anyone in distress, offering whatever help he could. The outpouring of love and respect at his funeral was a true testament to the countless lives he touched with his kindness and generosity.

This book is a tribute to his memory, his dreams, and the values he cherished. I am forever grateful for the love, guidance, and inspiration he provided, which continue to influence me every day.

Foreword

Homelessness, a persistent and complex challenge, is reaching a critical point as urbanization accelerates and economic disparities widen. This urgent issue demands more than temporary solutions; it requires an innovative, scalable, and sustainable approach that can fundamentally alter the socio-economic landscape. In Solving Homelessness, Burak Erten presents a transformative vision that is as bold in its ambition as it is detailed in its execution, offering a beacon of hope for a better future.

At the core of Burak's strategy is the concept of Homelessness Transformation Towns—a revolutionary model that integrates housing, employment, healthcare, and community development into self-sustaining urban ecosystems. These towns are meticulously designed to address the multifaceted nature of homelessness, providing not just shelter but also a pathway to dignity, self-sufficiency, and long-term stability. For government leaders, this model offers a comprehensive framework that aligns with national goals of economic growth, social equity, and sustainable development, providing reassurance of its effectiveness.

Each town, as envisioned by Burak, is a microcosm of potential—a fully integrated community that houses 5,000 individuals and is equipped with essential services, educational facilities, healthcare, and employment opportunities. The model's strength lies in its holistic approach: modular housing solutions, scalable infrastructure, and robust public services are all intertwined with economic engines such as industrial facilities, call centers, and urban farming projects. This integration ensures that residents are not merely recipients of aid but are active contributors to the economic and social fabric of their communities.

The economic implications of this model are profound. Burak outlines an innovative financing strategy that leverages federal bonds and a novel visa program to generate the necessary capital for these ambitious projects. By combining public investment with private sector engagement, this model ensures financial sustainability while also creating significant economic opportunities. Introducing special economic zones (SEZs) within these towns further incentivizes business investment, stimulates local economies, and reduces the burden on government resources.

For government officials and policymakers, Burak's blueprint offers a pragmatic and actionable solution to one of society's most pressing issues. The proposed model is not just about providing immediate relief; it is about creating a long-term, systemic change that addresses the root causes of homelessness. By integrating job creation with housing solutions and by embedding these initiatives within broader economic and social policies, Burak presents a model that is scalable, replicable, and adaptable to various regions and contexts.

The potential for replication and scalability is particularly compelling. With the right support, these Homelessness Transformation Towns could be established nationwide; each adapted to local conditions and needs yet grounded in a proven framework. This approach not only addresses the immediate needs of the homeless population but also contributes to broader national objectives, including economic revitalization, social cohesion, and public health improvements.

Moreover, the involvement of celebrities, corporations, and other key stakeholders underscores the model's viability and broad appeal. Their participation not only brings additional resources and attention to the issue but also helps to shift public perception and galvanize collective action. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures that the model is not only funded but also championed by influential voices, making it more likely to succeed in the long term.

Solving Homelessness is a critical read for anyone involved in policymaking, urban planning, or social services. It provides a detailed roadmap for transforming how we address homelessness—moving from reactive, short-term interventions to proactive, sustainable solutions. Burak Erten's work challenges us to think bigger, act bolder, and commit to a future where homelessness is managed and eradicated.

This book is more than a policy proposal; it is a visionary plan that combines economic innovation with social responsibility. As governments worldwide grapple with the complexities of homelessness, *Solving Homelessness* offers a beacon of hope, providing a clear, actionable path toward a more just and equitable society. It is a call to action for leaders at all levels to embrace this innovative approach, harness its potential, and work together to create a future where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

Keep up the amazing work, my Dear Brother!

Clinton Bryan

About Clinton G. Bryan -

Clinton Bryan is a U.S. Navy Seabee Combat Military Veteran and serial entrepreneur. His military experience in the U.S. Navy, combined with his formal education in business and travels, has refined Clinton into the philanthropic individual he is today.

His love for family, friends, people, and travel has set him on the journey to paying it forward through his writing as a legacy to help others envision the life they deserve—a life of intrinsic love, fulfillment, and happiness.

Clinton has authored seven books

https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B01JJO7A9G/about

The First Truly Holistic Solution for the Problem - Turn of Events

May 18, 2023

FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Initiative to Tackle Unsheltered Homelessness

1. Home
2. Briefing Room
3. Statements and Releases

Today, the Biden-Harris administration will announce the launch of ALL INside, a first-of-its-kind initiative to address unsheltered homelessness across the country. ALL INside is a key part of All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, which set a bold goal to reduce homelessness 25 percent by 2025 and ultimately build a country where every person has a safe and affordable home.

Through the ALL INside initiative, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and its 19 federal member agencies will partner with state and local governments to strengthen and accelerate local efforts to get unsheltered people into homes in six places: Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Phoenix Metro, Seattle, and the State of California.

To accelerate ongoing efforts by local leaders, the Biden-Harris Administration will offer innovative and tailored support to participating communities for up to two years, including by:

- Embedding a dedicated federal official in each community to accelerate locally-driven strategies and enact system-level changes to reduce unsheltered homelessness;
- Deploying dedicated teams across the federal government to identify opportunities for regulatory relief and flexibilities, navigate federal funding streams, and facilitate a peer learning network across the communities; and
- Convening philanthropy, the private sector, and other communities to identify opportunities for follow-on support and collaboration.

In addition, the Administration will launch new efforts to address major barriers to housing, health care, and other support for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. They include:

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will provide technical assistance to help communities leverage federal programs like Medicaid to cover and provide housing-related supportive services and behavioral health care.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration (SSA), and HHS will collaborate to address barriers that people may encounter when obtaining various forms of government-issued identification and other critical documents.
- The SSA will work with the communities and the federal *ALL INside* team to leverage data-sharing and regulatory flexibilities that can help facilitate access to support services like housing vouchers or Medicaid.
- The U.S. Department of Labor will connect the communities with local workforce boards and Job Corps sites to fully leverage local and state government employment opportunities for unsheltered youth.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide technical assistance to the communities to facilitate greater operational coordination in response to disasters, which often increase homelessness.
- HUD will help communities troubleshoot barriers to connecting people to rental assistance or housing programs, as well as assist communities to use regulatory flexibilities to speed up the processes enabling residents to move into properties and transition into permanent housing.

Additional USICH member agencies, including AmeriCorps, Department of Agriculture, Department of Justice, Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, the General Services Administration, as well as the Department of the Treasury, have also made commitments to support the ALL INside communities.

Today's announcement builds on historic support by the Biden-Harris Administration to help states and cities battle homelessness. President Biden's American Rescue Plan (ARP)—which represents the largest single-year investment in ending homelessness in U.S. history—helped prevent a surge of homelessness. Through the Treasury Department's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, for instance, the six ALL INside sites have invested more than $2.5 billion in projects focused on reducing and preventing homelessness. The ARP provided $5 billion for 70,000 Emergency Housing Vouchers—the first HUD voucher specifically for people experiencing homelessness beyond veterans. The ARP also delivered over $21 billion in emergency rental assistance, standing up a first-of-its-kind national eviction prevention infrastructure that has helped 8 million struggling households make rent and pay utilities bills, and kept eviction filings below pre-pandemic levels in the 1.5 years after the end of the eviction moratorium. Through the House America initiative, HUD and USICH worked with more than 100 communities to make the most of the American Rescue Plan; and in just over a year, they helped more than 100,000 people experiencing homelessness move into permanent homes.

Earlier this year, HUD released a first-of-its-kind package of grants totaling $486 million and approximately 3,300 housing vouchers to help 62 communities address unsheltered homelessness and homeless encampments, including $60 million to Chicago, $22 million to Dallas, $60 million to Los Angeles, and $36 million to other communities across the state of California.

The President's Fiscal Year '24 Budget proposes unprecedented investments not only to urgently address homelessness but also to prevent homelessness, including through additional housing vouchers; emergency rental assistance; increasing the supply of affordable housing; and establishing a guarantee of rental assistance for extremely low-income veterans and youth aging out of foster care—two groups disproportionately at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

> *"My plan offers a roadmap for not only getting people into housing but also ensuring that they have access to the support, services, and income that allow them to thrive."*
>
> *Joseph R. Biden Jr*

46th President of the United States of America

> *"The people of the United States have a right to economic and social security and to decent housing, and it is the responsibility of the government to see that those rights are respected."*
>
> *Dwight D. Eisenhower*

34th President of the United States of America