STREETS TO SHELTER
A HOMELESSNESS PLAN BASED IN REALITY
Kevin Faulconer’s STREETS TO SHELTER Plan will:

› Clean up homeless encampments
› Increase shelter, supportive services, and access to housing
› Fill gaps in the state’s homelessness policies
› Give local governments new tools to reduce homelessness
› Provide Californians a right to access clean public spaces
› Improve effectiveness of mental health, drug and alcohol treatments

I. ESTABLISH A RIGHT TO SHELTER AND AN OBLIGATION TO USE IT

The Faulconer administration will create a statewide framework, using new laws and executive orders, that provides shelter for people experiencing homelessness and gives the state and local governments the tools to clean up encampments. The combination of services coupled with the enforcement of existing encroachment, camping and other quality of life laws incentivizes individuals to go to shelters, which will serve as an entry point to recovery from homelessness where people can access mental health, substance abuse and housing navigation services.

ACTION: “RIGHT TO SHELTER” LAW

Problem Under Newsom:
Tent cities have spread across the state due in part to recent federal court rulings that have required governments to make shelter beds available before homeless individuals can be forced to leave public property. Newsom has not addressed this fundamental issue underlying the homelessness crisis, relying instead on piecemeal initiatives and funding decisions.

Solution under Faulconer:
The Faulconer administration will finally enable widespread enforcement of laws against unsafe and unsanitary tent encampments by creating a California law that requires the level of shelter mandated by these legal precedents.

How it works:
This will codify into California law existing federal court cases, such as Martin v. Boise, which require that shelter options be available before governments can enforce existing laws related to encroachment, camping and other quality of life issues. It will establish that everyone in California has a legal right to shelter, as well as a legal obligation for individuals to vacate public spaces if they refuse available shelter.

The law will create a statewide legal framework that underpins new actions by state government as well as supports local governments. Cities and counties will be essential partners in building shelters and providing compassionate but effective enforcement against encampments – beginning with warnings and offers to access services before culminating in removal if necessary. The enabling legislation will also include annual funding to help local governments meet the requirements of this law. Under this proposal the state can withhold funds from local governments that refuse to create shelter and enforce encampments laws.

This proposal recognizes that enforcement is only one tool in addressing the homelessness crisis. The Faulconer administration will provide subject matter expertise and support in developing a model programs that can guide local governments through the complex of issues surrounding homelessness and housing programs.

Funding:
Annual funding from the state General Fund to support local governments. Existing revenue sources could also be accessed, such as Proposition 63 (the 2004 Mental Health Services Act) which provides funding for mental health services.
ACTION: STATE SHELTERS TO ENABLE ENCAMPMENT CLEANUPS

Problem under Newsom:
Encampments along freeways, beaches, rivers, and other state properties are some of the most visible failures of California’s government. Part of the reason is because there is not enough shelter in California to put a roof over the heads of the tens of thousands of people living outdoors.

Newsom has done little to effectively address encampments or systematically create new shelter space. State support for local governments has come in the form of one-time aid as opposed to making this a consistent ongoing funding priority. He has proposed grants to clean up freeway encampments, but has not established shelters or directed the enforcement necessary to actually make progress on the issue.

Solution under Faulconer:
For the first time the state will play a direct role in helping to establish shelters. Governor Faulconer will sign an executive order to immediately begin establishing a network of state-led shelters to add to the overall number of shelter beds in California, helping to comply with federal court rulings that require shelter to be available before a homeless individual is obligated to vacate property.

The state will work with local governments to establish these shelters and/or contract with local non-profits to set them up directly. The state will also take progressive enforcement efforts, starting with warnings and access to services and escalating to removal to reduce encampments on state property.

How it works:
State government will establish homeless shelters on properties owned by the state or other entities. The state will immediately begin clearing encampments from its own properties – including highways, waterways, and canyons – while offering access to shelter and services. The shelters will connect people to mental health, substance abuse, housing navigation and other support services for homeless individuals.

The state will also create a new unit of the California Highway Patrol that works with homeless outreach coordinators, medical and mental health experts, CalTrans, local law enforcement, and other personnel to encourage homeless individuals to accept shelter and carry out enforcement against encroachment on state lands if individuals continue to refuse help. This will start with warnings and offers of services, and will have escalating enforcement as needed to remove encampments.

Funding:
Annual funding, with initial support from federal relief funds.
2. **CLEAN UP CALIFORNIA**

The Faulconer administration will operate under the principle that public spaces should be for everyone.

**ACTION: ESTABLISH THE PUBLIC’S RIGHT TO PUBLIC SPACES**

**Problem under Newsom:**
Californians across the state have lost access to their beaches, parks, bike trails, rivers, sidewalks, freeways, and other public spaces due to homeless encampments.

**Solution under Faulconer:**
The Faulconer administration will craft a law establishing the public’s right to access public spaces and require state and local governments to guarantee this right.

**How it works:**
State and local governments will be required to maintain public access to public spaces, and communities will be given the ability to hold agencies accountable if access is unreasonably hindered. The state, for example, would be mandated to keep public and visible spaces like freeways, overpasses, riverways, waterways, canyons, and underpasses clear of trash and debris.

**Funding:**
An initial funding source would be established to provide per capita funding to local governments to help maintain their public spaces.

**ACTION: ISSUE EXECUTIVE ORDER TO KEEP STATE PROPERTY CLEAN**

**Problem under Newsom:**
Newsom has proposed a cleanup program, but it only applies to freeways and local roads (not other high-visibility and high-usage properties) and includes funding for lower priority elements like art projects.

**Solution under Faulconer:**
Governor Faulconer will sign an executive order that supports the right of California residents to use public spaces on state property by making the adequate maintenance of these lands a standard duty of state agencies. This sends a clear message to Californians that they should be able to use state beaches, parks, open spaces, freeways and other state-owned properties.

**How it works:**
State agencies and departments will be directed to keep their properties clean and accessible to the public.

**Funding:**
Increased maintenance costs for state departments would come from the state General Fund.
3. HOUSING CALIFORNIA’S HEROES

California faces a major housing shortage despite Newsom’s promises to increase supply. The urgency of the homelessness crisis has left California without the time or money to build a new housing unit for every homeless individual. Using already-existing apartments is much cheaper and much faster alternative housing. The Faulconer administration will tap into existing housing stock to house individuals experiencing homelessness, starting with veterans.

ACTION: PARTNER WITH LANDLORDS TO IMMEDIATELY SECURE HOUSING

Problem under Newsom:
Homeless veterans should be some of the first in line for housing, given that various federal programs and funding sources exist to put a roof over the heads of people who have served our country. But nearly a third of homeless veterans in the U.S. are in California – more than 11,000 men and women.

Solution under Faulconer:
Governor Faulconer will issue an executive order to create “Housing California’s Heroes,” a statewide program to house homeless veterans. This policy is modeled on San Diego’s nationally-recognized “Housing our Heroes” program.

How it works:
The Department of Veteran Affairs will identify areas with high populations of veterans. The program works by:

- Recruiting and incentivizing landlords to rent properties to homeless veterans
- Providing rapid rehousing assistance
- Utilizing federal Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Vouchers (VASH)
- Utilizing federal housing vouchers

Funding:
Invest funding from state General Fund to start the program and utilize various other federal funding sources.

Kevin Faulconer talks with a homeless man about the struggles of living on the street.
4. **MORE EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

Tens of thousands of Californians are not homeless just because they lost a home, but because they are losing their fight with mental illness or addiction. We must find more solutions for the most challenging part of the homeless population: people suffering from a severe mental health issue, a substance abuse problem, or both.

**ACTION: AUDIT MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OTHER HOMELESS FUNDS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES**

**Problem under Newsom:**
The State Auditor released a scathing audit of California's homelessness efforts under the Newsom administration in February 2021, finding that the state has not set goals and is not properly tracking results statewide from the many different state agencies with homeless programs. California has a special millionaire's tax to fund mental health programs (2004's Proposition 63) and many other sources of funding that could be used for homelessness, yet the problem continues to get worse.

**Solution under Faulconer:**
The Faulconer administration will identify solutions to increase the effectiveness of homeless services by auditing all state funds used for mental health, drug and alcohol substance abuse programs and homeless services. The audit will also recommend metrics and help target resources at the most effective programs.

**How it works:**
This audit will help prevent homelessness by improving existing programs that help prevent people from becoming homeless, and address the challenges people face that keep them on the street. At least nine state agencies administer and oversee 41 different programs that provide funding for purposes related to homelessness. The number of state agencies increases when including mental health and substance abuse programs. Accurately assessing the current resources available is a major step toward providing a comprehensive statewide solution that coordinates all these funds so they can be used for effective solutions.

Currently, few metrics exist on how to measure the effectiveness of these programs. Part of the audit will produce metrics that measure how effective programs are at reducing homelessness or delivering mental health and substance abuse services.

**Funding:**
Costs will be minimal and funded as part of the state’s regular course of doing business.

*A homeless person's belongings left in a San Diego park.*