California is “home”, I say that facetiously, to one-fifth of the nation’s homeless. San Diego has the 4th largest concentration of homeless individuals and families. The issue of the homeless is painful for those who are homeless and an embarrassment to the so-called “greatest and richest country in the world.”

Recently the issue of the homeless and its intransigence has reached critical mass among governmental organizations and politicians. The crisis of the homeless is worsening and needs permanent solutions.

The visible homeless, as I call them, those that we see walking around disheveled, panhandling, acting out at times and needing law enforcement intervention, etc. are out there for everyone to see. Many folks call them the nuisance homeless. Law enforcement and the public at large wish that they would just go away. Wishing them away hasn’t worked. Not only are they not going away, they are increasing in numbers. Not to mention the invisible homeless.

Unlike a lack of unanimity among us on other social issues where honest people can and do disagree such as abortion, physician assisted suicide, death with dignity, legalizing marijuana, etc., on the issue of the homeless we can all agree that here is a need to seek a permanent solution where possible. All religions agree on the belief in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, finding shelter for the homeless. Where there is disagreement is how best to do this.

Today I call for the City Council of La Mesa to write San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and each of the five San Diego County Supervisors in calling for a symposium on the issue of the homeless. They are the big dogs in the fight. I am asking that the letter spell out a call for a convocation of governmental agencies, non-profits that deal with the homeless, selected San Diego County citizens, and selected homeless to brainstorm solutions to the homeless crisis. In that letter, I ask the City of La Mesa representatives to express their interest and desire in participating in this symposium.

This issue begs your attention to the proposal I have put forward. This would be an important first step in seeking agreed upon solutions to the plight of the homeless.