

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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RELEASE: Austin City Council to purchase hotel for new family violence shelter

Thursday's vote marks the first time in nearly 10 years Austin has added new family violence shelter space

We must house and care for survivors and their families

New shelter will help address SAFE's waitlist

AUSTIN, TX – This week, the Austin City Council will vote to purchase and renovate a hotel that will be used as a shelter for survivors of family violence ([Item 59](#)). The new shelter will be operated by The SAFE Alliance, a longstanding human service agency that serves survivors of violence and abuse in Central Texas.

Thursday's vote will mark the first time in nearly 10 years the city has added new family violence shelter space in Austin. Through this investment in our community, the City of Austin recognizes the importance of housing survivors and their families.

"As our community continues to grow, the need for shelter grows with it," **said SAFE Co-CEO Julia Spann**. "With this incredible commitment from the City of Austin, we will be able to provide more shelter space than ever before. And at this new shelter, SAFE will provide residents with case management, basic needs support (food, hygiene, etc.), children's services, and many other resources that help families heal and leave shelter with a plan for a safer future."

"This purchase adds new family violence shelter beds in Austin for the first time in more than a decade – this is a long time coming," **said Austin City Council Member Greg Casar**. "Austin is safer when family violence shelters and prevention services are in place. This is a true investment in public safety."

SAFE's current family violence shelter has only 30 rooms and operates with a constant waitlist. On average, about 37 people are on that waitlist on any given day. Once the new hotel is fully renovated and staffed, an additional 50 rooms of shelter will be available for survivors of family violence.

The need for more shelter is urgent. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, SAFE has received record-breaking call volumes. In October of this year, the SAFEline received 2,394 contacts—the most in SAFE's 45-plus year history. Of those contacts, more than 80% were family violence related.

Advocates have also been receiving an increase in calls from survivors who are experiencing more severe forms of violence. Survivors are at a higher risk of being killed by an intimate partner and their options for safe housing in the city are more limited than ever before.

With Thursday's vote, the city is committing to house people who are fleeing life-threatening violence. This resolution is sponsored by Council Members Gregorio Casar, Paige Ellis, Kathie Tovo, Mayor Pro Tem Natasha Harper-Madison, and Mayor Steve Adler.

Note: We ask that reporters refrain from sharing the address of the hotel to protect future SAFE clients.

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SAFE is a Central Texas nonprofit committed to providing safety, stability, and healing to anyone who has experienced violence and abuse. Locally, SAFE provides housing, support services, and prevention programs to stop the cycle of violence. Globally, SAFE engages in conversations that shape a culture free from violence and abuse. Learn more at safeaustin.org.

A native Texan, son of Mexican immigrants, and community organizer, Gregorio "Greg" Casar serves on the Austin City Council representing District 4. He is also a National Board Co-Chair of Local Progress, a movement of local elected officials advancing racial and economic justice.