

Homes. Support. Success.





September 11, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
 Governor, State of California  
 State Capitol  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Please Sign AB 1845 (L. Rivas/Chiu), Office to End Homelessness**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of a group of diverse supporters, we respectfully request that you to sign AB 1845 (L. Rivas/Chiu). AB 1845 will institutionalize an improved infrastructural response to homelessness in California. The bill passed with strong bipartisan support, without any opposition.

Project Roomkey is an example of how California has advanced innovation when faced with one of the most difficult crises of our time. We hope you can demonstrate similar innovative leadership in restructuring the state's response to homelessness.

While programs in California have enabled tens of thousands of households to exit homelessness, California has historically failed to heed calls for a more coordinated response to homelessness. You oversee more than 10 different state agencies and departments administering at least 30 different programs impacting homelessness, all operating independently from each other. In 1989, the Little Hoover Commission recommended coordinating state programs. Almost three decades later, in 2017, the California State Auditor found California was less effective in sheltering our homeless residents because we have no single entity, "charged specifically with addressing homelessness."

In February of this year, the Legislative Analyst similarly said the state's fragmented response has resulted in—

- Difficulties tracking homelessness-related state expenditures;
- Difficulties assessing the effectiveness of specific interventions;
- Difficulties determining whether programs are working collaboratively; and
- Difficulties assessing outcomes.

*For more information on AB 1845, contact [Sharon.Rapport@csh.org](mailto:Sharon.Rapport@csh.org) or [CMartin@housingca.org](mailto:CMartin@housingca.org).*

Many of our organizations, in offering community-based housing and services, have experienced the challenges of the state's fragmentation while navigating Notices of Funding Availability/Requests for Proposals with conflicting requirements or uncoordinated due dates.

During your campaign, you recognized this fragmentation in calling for a "czar" to coordinate the state's response. Your Council on Regional Homeless Advisors likewise recommended creating "a single point of authority on homelessness," suggesting, "a high-level official that reports directly to Governor Newsom," who is working on a day-to-day basis with staff to coordinate the state's response. They further recommended working to coordinate funding for housing and services, to develop protocols to prevent people discharging state-funded institutions into homelessness, and to develop evidence-based policies across housing and services agencies.

The LAO recommended following the recommendations of the Council on Regional Homeless Advisors in identifying a clear governance model, clarifying state responsibilities, improving accountability, and establishing rigorous oversight. AB 1845 accomplishes recommendations from both the LAO and your Council of Regional Homeless Advisors.

AB 1845 creates a single point of contact on homelessness through a Secretary on Homelessness, but does not stop there. The Secretary will focus full-time on coordinating the state's response and leading an Office to End Homelessness. By placing the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council within the Office to End Homelessness, existing Council staff will have the authority to promote collaboration across departments and agencies.

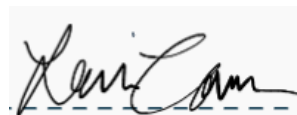
AB 1845 will centralize staff working to coordinate the state's response, avoiding duplication of this work. The Office will help create discharge protocols for state-funded institutional settings, and develop evidence-based standards across housing and services programs. The bill has next to no fiscal cost, only the cost difference between a Deputy Secretary and a Secretary position. In absorbing the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council into the Office, AB 1845 would serve the purpose of funding you requested and the Legislature passed in this year's budget.

AB 1845 also incorporates changes to the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council *your Administration requested*. It will institutionalize all of these structural improvements for decades to come.

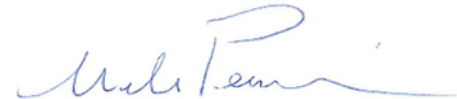
You have taken unprecedented steps to improve the state's response to homelessness. We ask you to take the next logical steps in implementing the innovations in AB 1845. You certainly did not foster fragmentation; we ask you, though, to end it through statutory reforms that will institutionalize a structure promoting collaborative solutions. At this time of projected increases in homelessness in the tens of thousands, we ask you to elevate the state's response under one cabinet-level position for future Administrations. Finally, in working to make our state programs as effective as they could be, we ask you to listen to over 30 years of advice to modernize California's approach to solving homelessness.

We urge you to sign AB 1845, and look forward to working with you to implement this historic bill.

Sincerely,



Leonora Camner, Executive Director  
Abundant Housing Los Angeles



Milo Peinemann, Chief Executive Officer  
American Family Housing



William F. Pickel, Chief Executive Officer  
Brilliant Corners



Rob Wiener, Executive Director  
California Coalition for Rural Housing

**Mary Kate Bacalao**

Mary Kate Bacalao, Director External Affairs  
& Policy  
Compass Family Services



Jennifer Loving, Executive Director  
Destination: Home



Amy Turk, Chief Executive Officer  
Downtown Women's Center



Dora Leong Gallo, President & CEO  
A Community of Friends



Michael Winkler, Mayor  
City of Arcata



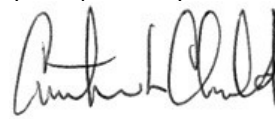
Debra Carlton, Executive Vice President  
California Apartment Association



Krista Niemczyk, Public Policy Director  
California Partnership to End Domestic  
Violence



Sharon Rapport, Director, CA Policy  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
(co-sponsor)



Curtis Child, Legislative Director  
Disability Rights California



Laura Hall, President & CEO  
EAH Housing



Rev. Sophia DeWitt, Program Director  
East Bay Housing Organizations



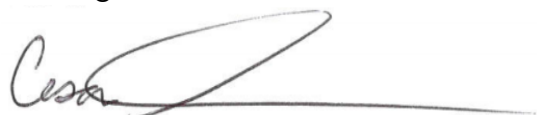
Andrea Urton, Chief Executive Officer  
HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County



Deanne Pearn, Executive Director  
Hope Solutions



Celina Alvarez, Executive Director  
Housing Works



Cesar Covarrubias, Executive Director  
Kennedy Commission



Meghan Rose, General Counsel &  
Director of Policy  
Leading Age



Stephanie Klasky-Gamer, President & CEO  
LA Family Housing



Alexander Russell, Executive Vice President  
Many Mansions



Amie Fishman, Executive Director  
Non-Profit Housing Association of  
Northern California (NPH)



Scott Larson, Chief Executive Officer  
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Mark Casanova, Executive Director  
Homeless Health Care Los Angeles



Christopher Martin, Policy Director  
Housing California (co-sponsor)



Amy Lemley, Executive Director  
John Burton Advocates for Youth



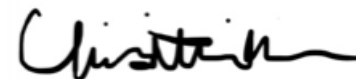
Machael Smith, Executive Director  
Kings-Tulare Homeless Alliance



Pamela E. Gibbs, Director, Government  
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Los Angeles County Office of Education



Heidi Marston, Executive Director  
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority



Christina Miller, Senior Policy Fellow,  
California State  
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Joel Roberts, Chief Executive Officer  
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John Maceri, Executive Director  
The People Concern



DeAngelo Mack, State Policy Director  
Public Health Advocates



Joyce Roberts, Individual with Lived  
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Supervisor Nathan Fletcher  
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Jacky Morales-Ferrand, Director  
City of San Jose Housing Department



Tom Collishaw, Executive Director  
Self-Help Enterprises



Ruth Schwartz, Executive Director  
Shelter Partnership



Lee Raagas, Chief Executive Officer  
Skid Row Housing Trust



Alan Greenlee, Executive Director  
Southern California Association of Non-Profit  
Housing (SCANPH)



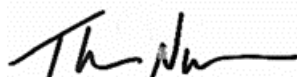
Va Lecia Adams Kellum, President &  
CEO  
St. Joseph Center



Anna Hasselblad, Director of Public Policy  
United Ways of California



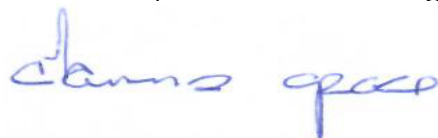
Michelle Murphy, Director, Public Affairs  
United Way of Orange County



Tommy Newman, Senior Director,  
Impact Initiatives  
United Way of Greater Los Angeles



Michael Herald, Director of Policy  
Advocacy  
Western Center on Law & Poverty



Channa Grace, President  
Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge, and Services