Replace all highlighted text, sign, save, and submit to the legislative portal at <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>

Insert Organizational Letterhead

January 25, 2021

The Honorable Autumn Burke

Chair of the Assembly Revenue

and Finance Committee

1020 N Street, Room 167A

Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David Chiu

Chair of the Assembly Housing

and Community Development Committee

1020 N Street, Room 156

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 71 (Rivas/Chiu/Bloom/Wicks) Statewide Homelessness Solutions Program – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymembers Burke and Chiu:

On behalf of the insert organization, I write to express our strong support for Assembly Bill 71 (L. Rivas), which commits the legislature to a comprehensive plan to address homelessness by investing, for the first time in history, dedicated ongoing state investment in long-term solutions to homelessness.

Add 1-4 sentences about your organization and connection to this issue.

Housing insecurity and domestic violence are fundamentally linked. Domestic violence is a leading cause of women’s homelessness and housing is the most frequently requested need of survivors. Survivor become homeless when fleeing or attempting to flee an abusive situation. Between 22-57% of unhoused women reported domestic violence was an immediate cause of their homelessness.[[1]](#endnote-1) Survivors of domestic violence are especially vulnerable to homelessness due to the dynamics of power and control present in an abusive relationship. The need for safe housing and the economic resources to maintain safe housing are two of the most pressing concerns among abused women who are planning to or have recently left the person causing that harm.[[2]](#endnote-2)

California leads the nation in total number of people experiencing homelessness, with one in four Americans experiencing homelessness residing in California. In January 2019, an estimated 151,278 people experienced homelessness in California at a single point in time, a 17% increase since 2018. African American, indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities show alarmingly higher rates of homelessness throughout the state. For example, African Americans, who represent only about 6.5% of Californians, account for nearly 40% of the state’s homeless population. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened our homelessness crisis by putting hundreds of thousands of Californians into financial distress, and either on the brink of or experiencing homelessness. It has also endangered the health and wellbeing of those experiencing homelessness, and depleted local resources. Therefore, the need to address the homelessness crisis with urgency and innovative solutions at this moment is critical.

AB 71 (L. Rivas) establishes a permanent source of funding and a collaborative statewide strategy for solving homelessness. It will fill gaps within the state’s response and will scale evidence-based solutions, while promoting innovations to move people quickly into permanent housing. AB 71 also aims to eliminate racial bias, ensure youth and survivors of domestic violence have equitable access to housing and services, and enhance coordination and collaboration among state and local agencies. The bill ensures a transparent and accountable process through performance measures, rewards local governments for hitting aggressive goals, and removes funding for any jurisdiction failing to spend resources quickly. It requires annual reporting, and strengthens data collection at the local and state levels. In transforming the state’s response to homelessness, it will also create a more transparent program than the state has ever before crafted. AB 71 relies on funding for large and multinational corporations for the revenue source, rebalancing inequities laid bare by COVID.

We are committed to ensuring homelessness becomes brief, rare and nonrecurrent. Ongoing state investments, combined with significant structural changes to how California oversees, coordinates, and delivers results are essential to solving homelessness. For these reasons, we strongly support AB 71.

Thank you for your leadership in combatting homelessness and working to solve our state’s housing crisis. If you have any questions, please contact me at insert contact email.

Sincerely,

Insert signature (if possible)

Name

Title

cc: The Honorable Luz Rivas

The Honorable Richard Bloom

The Honorable Buffy Wicks

1. Wilder Research Center, Homelessness in Minnesota 2003 22 (2004); Center for Impact Research, Pathways to and from Homelessness: Women and Children in Chicago Shelters 3 (2004); Nat’l Center on Family Homelessness & Health Care for the Homeless Clinician’s Network, Social Supports for Homeless Mothers, 14 26 (2003); Inst. For Children & Poverty, The Hidden Migration: Why New York City Shelters Are Overflowing with Families (2004); Homes for the Homeless & Inst. For Children & Poverty, Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America 3 (1998); Virginia Coalition for the Homeless, 1995 Shelter Provider Survey (1995) (out of print), cited in Nat’l Coalition for the Homeless, Domestic Violence and Homelessness: NCH Fact Sheet #8 (1999). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Clough, A. Draughon, J.E., Njie-Carr, V., Rollins, C. & Glass, N. (2014). “Having housing made everything else possible”: Affordable, safe and stable housing for women survivors of violence. Qualitative Social Work, 13 (5), 671-688. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)