*Insert organizational letterhead*

*Replace all highlighted text, sign, save, and submit to the legislative portal at* [*https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates*](https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates)*. If you have any questions, please email* *policy@cpedv.org**.*

*Email a copy of the letter to* *alex.hirsch@sen.ca.gov**; Cynthia.Yepez@sen.ca.gov; and* *policy@cpedv.org**.*

DATE

Senator Scott Weiner

Chair, Senate Housing Committee

1021 O Street, Room 3330

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 914 (Rubio) – The HELP (“Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations”) Act – Support**

Dear Senator Weiner,

On behalf of *organization name*, I write today in support of SB 914 (Rubio). This important legislation will reduce gender bias and disparities in outcomes in California’s response to homelessness by embedding a focus on domestic violence survivors and other vulnerable populations into local homelessness plans.

*Add information about your organization and connection to this issue.*

Domestic violence is one of the leading drivers of homelessness for women. Nationally, 57% of

unhoused women reported domestic violence was an immediate cause of their homelessness.[[1]](#endnote-1)

In California, 18% of unhoused individuals reported experiencing domestic violence according to the state’s Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) demographic data.[[2]](#endnote-2) In FY 19-20, the 102 domestic violence emergency shelter programs in California provided shelter to 18,989 survivors, for a total of 622,646 shelter nights for the survivors and their children.[[3]](#endnote-3) The programs serving these survivors are a vital component of our collective response to homelessness in California.

Unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness are unhoused individuals experiencing homelessness without children or dependents in their care.[[4]](#endnote-4) Nationally, unaccompanied women comprise nearly one-in-three of all unhoused individuals.[[5]](#endnote-5) 44% of all unaccompanied women in the United States live in California and make up 40% of all unhoused individual Californians. Statewide, unaccompanied women comprise more than double the number of unhoused youth and veterans *combined,* and double that of unhoused families. This population of women endure high rates of first-time homelessness, longer spells of homelessness, and higher barriers in accessing stable housing. Unaccompanied women are also disproportionately women of color, particularly Black women, and they report extremely high incidence of trauma–whether physical, sexual, or psychological in nature–that is compounded by their ongoing houselessness.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Despite making up a significant portion of the homeless population, our state’s homelessness

response does not appropriately consider the needs of these two intersecting groups. Due to confidentiality requirements for survivors of domestic violence, victim service providers are prohibited by federal law from entering client-level information into the federal Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or the state’s HDIS. As a result, data about the number of survivors served, their needs, and program outcomes are not considered when measuring local responses to homelessness.

SB 914 will improve California’s response to homelessness by requiring cities, counties, and

continuums of care that receive state funding to address homelessness to include domestic violence

survivors and unaccompanied women within the vulnerable populations for whom specific system

supports are developed. The bill also requires the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to set

and measure progress towards goals to prevent and end homelessness for these vulnerable populations.

By ensuring that data about these populations and the work of the relevant service providers is incorporated into local homelessness planning will ensure that our cities, counties, and Continuums of Care have a more complete picture of the homeless population in their community and are better able to achieve results in preventing homelessness and supporting individuals in moving to stable housing. Our housing solutions must be adaptable to the needs of people who have experienced domestic violence. SB 914 (Rubio) will keep California at the forefront of innovative responses to homelessness and domestic violence.

For these reasons we are pleased to support SB 914 (Rubio) and respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

*Insert signature*

*Name*

*Organization*

Cc: Senator Susan Rubio

1. “Pressing Issues Facing Families Who Are Homeless.” The National Center on Family Homelessness, 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. State of California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency Homeless Data Information System. <https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services Grants Management. Joint Legislative Budget Committee Report. April 2021. Available at <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/GrantsManagementSite/Documents/2021%20JLBC%20Report.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. USICH, "Expanding the Toolbox: The Whole-of-Government Response to Homelessness," October 2020. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report – Part 1,” January 2021. Available at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. 2021 Senate Bill 678. Available at [Bill Text - SB-678 Unaccompanied Women Experiencing Homelessness Act of 2021. (ca.gov)](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB678) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)