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August 20, 2021

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
Chair, California State Assembly, Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Senate Bill 17 – Office of Racial Equity  
Letter of Support from All Home CA**

Dear Chair Gonzalez,

I am writing to urge your support for SB 17 (Pan), a bill that establishes the Office of Racial Equity and the Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council. These new bodies would be tasked with developing a statewide racial equity framework and concrete strategies for addressing racial inequity across state government. Establishing an Office of Racial Equity is a critical first step in turning a commitment to equity into actionable steps toward achieving it. Furthermore, SB 17 also creates a new position, a Chief Equity Officer appointed by the Governor, which reports to the Secretary of Government Operations, to collaborate with the Office of Racial Equity on the statewide framework and also create a state plan to address racial disparities in state hiring and procurement.

All Home is a San Francisco Bay Area organization that advances regional solutions that disrupt the cycle of poverty and homelessness, reduce racial disparities in housing and homelessness program outcomes, and create more housing and economic mobility options for extremely low-income (ELI) households. We work across counties, sectors, and silos to advance coordinated, solutions and build a movement to challenge the status quo that perpetuates homelessness. We have built a coalition of leaders in the public and private spheres who have committed to a consensus goal to dramatically reduce unsheltered homelessness by 75% in the next three years.

Here are a sample of troubling and unacceptable statistics that underscore why our state needs an Office of Racial Equity:

- Although the Indigenous population in the San Francisco Bay Area is relatively small, Indigenous people disproportionality suffer homelessness by a staggering 12x their representation in the general population. Likewise, African Americans are overrepresented among people who experience homelessness by 5x their representation in the general population.
- 6.5% of Californians identify as Black, but they account for nearly 40% of the state's homeless population.

- According to Urban Institute’s Survey of Consumer Finances (2016), the average Black household had 10% as much wealth as the average White household and this disparity could not be explained by differences in education, income, or savings rates.

Black and Brown Californians are still largely living in high poverty neighborhoods, not by choice, but as a result of more than a century of exclusionary government policies and racially motivated covenants. Structural racism is a root cause of intergenerational poverty and the general disadvantage Black and Latinx households experience in the ability to accumulate wealth compared to White households. Racism has been and still is endemic in our public systems – education, health care, workforce and community development and housing. These racial disparities are obvious, and as a state, we must make clear efforts to confront and remedy them. However, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion are consistently treated as an afterthought or a box to check, rather than a lens through which all our governmental policies and practices should be evaluated. For the state to deliver meaningful, equitable outcomes, racial equity must be explicit and centered at the foundation of meaningful reform. Addressing racial disparities cannot and will not happen by itself; it requires a consciously designed mechanism and clear-eyed action to identify and correct inequities. California can and must play a proactive role in dismantling racial inequities, particularly those that have been made patently clear and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Passing SB 17, establishing a statewide Office of Racial Equity and appointing a Chief Equity Officer, is a crucial first step. A fully resourced and appropriately authorized office is a powerful tool not only to redress structural racism in our public systems, but also to generate new pathways to close the opportunity gap for BIPOC communities throughout the state. For this reason, I respectfully request your support of SB 17.

Sincerely,



Tomiquia Moss  
Founder/CEO  
All Home