



September 22, 2022

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

RE: Request for Signature on SB 1083 (Skinner) – CalWORKs: homeless assistance

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of All Home, we respectfully request your signature of SB 1083 (Skinner), which will expand the criteria the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program uses to determine whether or not a family is homeless or at risk of homelessness and will require counties to provide a caseworker to assist families with securing permanent housing. All Home is a Bay Area organization that advances regional solutions to disrupt the cycles of poverty and homelessness and create more economic mobility for people with extremely low incomes.

The CalWORKs program provides cash assistance and other social services for low-income families, helping families meet their basic needs (including rent, food, and utility bills) and helping to move children out of poverty. Its homeless assistance (HA) program specifically helps families in the CalWORKs program (including those that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness) secure and maintain housing. According to the Department of Social Services (CDSS), the HA program approves temporary assistance for approximately 48,352 families and permanent assistance for 4,898 in an average year, but there is nevertheless a growing number of families with children who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in California.

In light of this alarming trend, we must ensure that CalWORKs is reaching as many low income families and pregnant people as possible, that it is as effective as possible in keeping families stably housed, and that vulnerable families are not being excluded from its assistance due to gaps in criteria or a lack of clarity in how one can qualify. SB 1083 will make various changes to the CalWORKs program in order to do this. It will expand the criteria to determine whether a family is homeless to include if the family has received *any* notice that could lead to an eviction. It will also require counties to provide housing navigation caseworkers to assist families with securing permanent housing. It will require county human services agencies to refer all pregnant CalWORKs recipients to perinatal home visiting services. Lastly, SB 1083 will clarify the means by which a pregnant person may verify their eligibility for CalWORKs HA, increasing transparency and helping ensure the program reaches those who need it.

It is imperative that this important program assist a maximum number of housing-insecure, low-income California households, and that it is able to support and house homeless families and pregnant people in timely, effective ways. The changes SB 1083 will make to CalWORKs stand to improve the capacity of this successful existing program and help the state keep pregnant people and families housed. For these reasons, we urge you to sign SB 1083 into law.

Sincerely,

Tomiquia Moss

Tomiquia Moss
All Home
Founder and CEO