



March 1, 2023

The Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer
Chair, Public Safety Committee
1020 N St, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 257 (Hoover) - OPPOSE

Dear Chair Jones-Sawyer,

On behalf of All Home, I am writing in opposition to AB 257 (Hoover), which would make it a crime to "camp" on any street, sidewalk, or other public right-of-way within 500 feet of a school, daycare center, playground, or youth center. 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.

AB 257 would destabilize, criminalize, and violate the human rights of Californians who are struggling just to survive, while failing to address the biggest underlying driver of homelessness: the lack of affordable and accessible housing to Californians with the lowest incomes.

California is experiencing a housing affordability crisis decades in the making, with a statewide shortage of 1.2 million affordable homes. In the Bay Area, the average extremely low-income household is spending 76% of their income on rent each month. The increasing number of people living with extremely low incomes who are unable to secure or maintain stable and affordable housing continues to undermine our efforts to reduce inflow into homelessness. By criminalizing the very existence of unhoused Californians in vast swaths of public space, AB 257 perpetuates an ineffective and traumatic "policing-first" approach that does nothing to solve homelessness. Homelessness, poverty, and incarceration are inherently linked, and the financial and carceral penalties imposed by AB 257 would only make it harder for unhoused Californians to find housing and get back on their feet..

Our courts have established that criminalizing unhoused people because they are homeless, or evicting them from encampments without offering them a decent place to go,

violates their constitutional and civil rights. Recent research shows that criminalizing basic activities of living while unhoused is costly, ineffective, and reinforces dangerous racialized stereotypes. As Black people and other people of color disproportionately live without housing or shelter and are unjustly targeted by law enforcement, AB 257 would reproduce systemic inequity in housing, health, employment, and legal outcomes. This bill would take us backwards, and make it harder to actually solve homelessness.

We urge the legislature not to expand laws that criminalize homelessness and punish Californians struggling to secure stable housing. To end homelessness, we must instead invest in the solutions that have been proven to actually address homelessness: affordable housing, service provider outreach, and policies that provide economic mobility for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tomiquia Moss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tomiquia Moss
Founder and CEO
All Home