



March 21, 2023

Senator Aisha Wahab
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814
Sacramento CA, 95814

RE: SB 31 -Encampments: sensitive areas: penalties- OPPOSE

Dear Chair Wahab,

On behalf of All Home, I am writing in opposition to SB 31 (Jones), which would further criminalize the very existence of our unhoused neighbors in public spaces. SB 31 would make it a crime to sit, lie, sleep, or store, use, maintain, or place personal property upon any street, sidewalk, or other public right-of-way within 1000 feet of a so-called "sensitive area", including schools, daycare centers, parks, or libraries. We are gravely concerned that SB 31 would further destabilize, criminalize, and violate the human rights of unhoused Californians while failing to address the underlying driver of homelessness: the lack of affordable and accessible housing to Californians with the lowest incomes.

Given the ubiquity of schools, parks, libraries, and daycare centers, this policy would effectively make it a crime for Californians who lack safe and stable housing to exist in public space, and perpetuate a "policing-first" approach to addressing our state's affordable housing and homelessness crisis. By framing the bill as means to protect children and families, this measure perpetuates false narratives that unhoused people are inherently dangerous. It also ignores that our unhoused neighbors include families and children who attend schools and visit parks and libraries. Further, as Black people and other people of color disproportionately experience homelessness and are unjustly targeted by law enforcement, SB 31 also reinforces dangerous racialized stereotypes that continue to reproduce systemic inequity in housing, health, employment, and legal outcomes.

Only housing ends homelessness, and at present, California is experiencing a statewide shortage of 1.2 million affordable homes. Without housing options, criminalizing basic activities of living does not solve the homelessness crisis - it exacerbates it. As shown by

recent research and reporting from across the state, sweeping encampments and criminalizing unhoused people with nowhere else to go is traumatic, destabilizing, costly, and ineffective. People displaced by sweeps regularly lose access to their belongings, including identity documents, medication and important personal items. Penalties for sleeping create legal and financial barriers that make it harder to access housing or services in the future, and SB 31's proposed enforcement zones would disrupt critical service and resource provision. Finally, a police-based response to homelessness is extremely costly to local governments, diverting critical resources away from long-term solutions like affordable and supportive housing, mental health services, infrastructure, and other critical life-affirming resources. 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.

Rather than expand laws that criminalize homelessness, we urge the legislature to instead continue to pursue policies that deliver on our neighbors' basic housing needs, including through budget investments in supportive and affordable housing, service provider outreach, community-based mental health and substance use treatment services to support our unhoused neighbors in connecting to the housing and care they want and need.

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