



May 3, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
State Capitol, Room 412  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 634 (Becker) - Opportunity Housing - SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Portantino,

On behalf of All Home, I am writing in support of SB 634 (Becker), which would streamline the approval of non-congregate, relocatable interim housing that serves people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

All Home is a Bay Area organization focused on addressing the cycle of poverty and homelessness and on creating more housing stability and economic mobility for people with extremely low incomes. In order to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, California must scale multiple solutions simultaneously, including interim housing, permanent exits, and targeted homelessness prevention.

Interim housing is a temporary place to stabilize after living on the streets, a non-congregate setting with privacy, security, supportive services, and a pathway to a permanent home. This solution is especially important in California, where we have such a severe shortage of deeply affordable housing, and building is expensive and takes time. Practitioners tell us that people experiencing homelessness accept interim housing at higher rates than traditional shelter, and also move on to permanent housing at higher rates. Based on the work of our partners in the Bay Area, the most successful sites use flexible length of stays, offer a basic level of supportive services (including housing navigation), and have strategic eligibility criteria, among other important characteristics.

One of the most significant barriers to scaling this solution is delay and neighborhood resistance. We support SB 634's inclusion of "opportunity housing," an interim housing type that is relocatable, within the existing statutory CEQA exemption that applies to low-barrier

navigation centers. Many interim housing projects are designed to be built quickly, but we lose the benefit of this speed – and the ability to rapidly serve people living outside –

because of permit approval delays and local resistance. SB 634 would make it easier to approve this type of interim housing so it can deliver on its potential.

We strongly support the recent amendment clarifying that opportunity housing is designed to serve people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It is important to clarify how this solution fits into the overall housing system: permanent housing is the goal, but interim housing can address immediate safety and health concerns for people on the path to a permanent home. We also support the amendment providing relocation plans for residents of these sites. Opportunity housing is particularly beneficial because it can be built on land that is slated for another use, and it's important to ensure there's a plan to transition residents into permanent housing when the site is no longer available.

To significantly reduce and ultimately end homelessness, we all must act with the urgency this crisis demands. The street cannot be the waiting room for a permanent home, and communities need flexible, scalable, high-quality interim solutions along with permit approval reforms and resources for affordable housing. For these reasons, we support SB 634 and respectfully urge you to move this important bill forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tomiquia Moss".

Tomiquia Moss

Founder and CEO

All Home