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COMMITTEES
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THE ECONOMY
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ETHICS

September 22, 2020

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

RE: Sign AB 1845 (L. Rivas/Chiu), Office to End Homelessness

Dear Governor Newsom:

We are writing to urge you to sign AB 1845 (L. Rivas/Chiu). As legislators who are deeply committed to solving homelessness, we strongly supported this bill when before us. This important legislation will cement critically needed structural changes to assist our state's ability to effectively respond to the homelessness crisis. Indeed, it will end decades of fragmentation and establish a more coordinated, collaborative response, without incurring significant additional costs at a time when the state grapples with an on-going budget deficit.

We value your leadership in elevating homelessness as a top priority for your Administration, and were gratified that you dedicated your State of the State speech to this critical issue. As you know, homelessness is no longer isolated to urban communities. You made this abundantly clear when you stated, "Some of the most troubling increases have occurred in rural areas, in small towns, in remote parts of the state." These urban and rural communities are the same parts of the state we collectively represent. Throughout your impassioned speech, you mentioned the need to be bold in addressing homelessness, while also being smart in how our state responds. We agree.

AB 1845 offers an opportunity for us as legislators to collaborate with you to implement bold innovations, such as improving institutional discharge protocols, tracking and improving program outcomes, establishing a universal application for funding, and ending decades of fragmentation between state departments and agencies. In fact, AB 1845 incorporates several principles you identified in your State of the State:

- It puts homelessness squarely as a priority for administrations to come;
- It offers transformational solutions to the state's processes;
- It will replace California's "scattershot approach with a coordinated crisis-level response";
- It will advance a new framework;
- It will help our state achieve "tight-fisted accountability" in examining outcomes our state programs are achieving; and
- Perhaps most importantly, it will reduce bureaucracy by lessening duplication of work among state agency staff, will "break through bureaucratic barriers," and will eliminate roadblocks to housing and services.

Further, AB 1845 incorporates the changes your staff recommended to strengthen membership of the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council, while keeping intact the original intent of the bill.

Project Roomkey and Homekey are perfect examples of how increased coordination and collaboration among state agency staff, through Governor's Office guidance, has helped California implement and advance essential programs effectively. AB 1845 applies this same ethos to reforming our archaic state structure to combating homelessness. To achieve these structure changes, legislation was necessary to move the state's Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council and its staff to an Office to End Homelessness, within your office. AB 1845 does not require you to hire new staff for this Office, but allows the Council to operate more effectively and with greater influence when coordinating with your policy staff and agencies and departments within your line of authority.

AB 1845 follows the advice of multiple independent audits, the Legislative Analyst's Office, and your own Council of Regional Homeless Advisors. It solves problems present in the state's current response to homelessness, that the LAO has identified, such as: challenges in tracking homelessness-related state expenditures, assessing the effectiveness of programs, and in determining whether agencies/departments are effectively collaborating. It will make it easier for our local programs to apply for state funding, and reduce red tape and implementation delays in allocating funding. For this reason, many of the mayors and counties in urban and rural districts we represent are supporting AB 1845.

We recognize AB 1845 will take time to fully implement. However, it will institutionalize these structural improvements—innovations you promoted—for decades to come. As we anticipate increases in homelessness of potentially tens of thousands of Californians due to COVID-19, now is the best time to lay the groundwork in establishing a government structure that will be able to rise to these new challenges.

We urge you sign this important legislation and look forward to working with you and your staff to implement it.

Sincerely,



LUZ RIVAS
Assemblymember, 39th District



David Chiu
Assemblymember, 17th District



Richard Bloom
Assemblymember, 50th District



Autumn Burke
Assemblymember, 62nd District



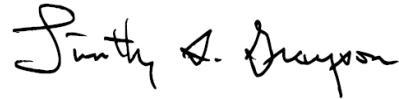
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Assemblymember, 3rd District



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