

February 18, 2016

The Honorable Kevin de León
Senate President pro Tempore, 24th District
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: State Senate Homelessness Proposal

Dear Senate President De León,

Steven Acevedo is in full support of the California Senate proposal to increase affordable housing opportunities for the homeless, especially the chronically homeless with mental illness.

Homelessness is a tragedy witnessed daily throughout California where more homeless people live than anywhere else in the nation. Most, if not all, California communities have experienced the negative affects homelessness can have on businesses, government resources, community safety and wellbeing, and neighborhood quality of life.

Increasing housing for the homeless is not only the compassionate thing to do but also fiscally prudent. The chronically homeless places the greatest strain on public resources in health, public safety, and social service costs.

The Senate proposal seeks to assist local governments fight homelessness with \$2 billion for permanent housing for those with mental illness and \$200 million over four years for temporary rent subsidies.

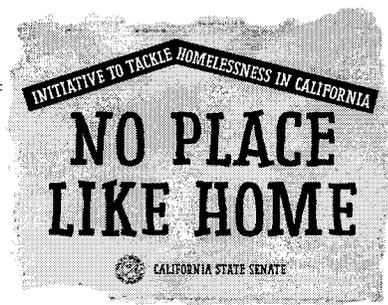
The Senate's effort to spur development of affordable housing, coupled with other elements in its proposal to support successful programs that prevent homelessness or shelter vulnerable families and individuals, will surely help our state better cope with the tragedy of homelessness.

Strongly supports the Senate proposal on homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Acevedo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven Acevedo
CEO/Owner, ChimMaya, Inc
5283 East Beverly Blvd / Los Angeles, CA 90022



“No Place Like Home” Initiative

Bipartisan Senate Initiative to Prevent and Address Homelessness in our Local Communities

The Senate proposal on homelessness re-purposes bond money from Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, and creatively leverages billions of additional dollars from other local, state, and federal agencies to achieve the following goals:

- ✓ A \$2 billion bond to construct permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons with mental illness.
- ✓ \$200 million, over 4 years, to provide supportive housing in the shorter-term, rent subsidies, while the permanent housing is constructed or rehabilitated. This will help tens of thousands of people afford a place to live.
- ✓ Support for two special housing programs that will assist families:
 - *The “Bringing Families Home” pilot project, a county matching grant program to reduce homelessness among families that are part of the child welfare system.*
 - *The CalWORKs Housing Support Program, which provides housing and support services for CalWORKs families in danger of homelessness.*

Preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place

- ✓ The State will additionally work to stop homelessness before it starts by targeting an increase in Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) grants to 1.3 million Californians who are considered at risk of becoming homeless. These grants provide income support for the aged, blind, and disabled poor who cannot work.
 - *Rates of homelessness are higher for persons with disabilities who cannot work; SSI/SSP is intended to help them make ends meet, and a large portion of grants usually goes toward rent.*
- ✓ There will be one-time investment to incentivize local governments to boost outreach efforts and advocacy to get more eligible poor people enrolled in the SSI/SSP program.
 - *The federal government covers 72% of the total costs of the SSI/SSP program, so state and local benefits are multiplied significantly for each newly eligible recipient.*

Background

Homelessness is not just a big city issue, and it does not just affect the people who are enduring it themselves. It also matters to small business and impacts all of us in our quality of life. With more than 100,000 people living on the streets, it is a clear symptom of serious problems within our society.

And the problems driven by homelessness are becoming more costly and prevalent.

In response, a bipartisan coalition of members from the California State Senate introduced a solution that aims at the actual illness: not the symptoms. This first-of-its kind “No Place like Home” initiative will assist local communities in preventing and addressing homelessness.

California has 22-percent of America’s homeless population. California also has more than one third of the nation’s chronically homeless, and an even higher percentage among homeless women. We also have the largest number of veterans experiencing homelessness, making up 24-percent of the national homeless veteran population. Many veterans are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, mental illness, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.

Of the 29,178 chronically homeless in California, nearly 85 percent are unsheltered. Serving these individuals can often cost the public more than \$100,000 per person each year. It costs more not to deal with this problem than to deal with it.

While housing and mental health services are governed by local governments, it’s clear that the problem is too expansive for the state to stand by the sidelines.

State Resources. The State Legislature will directly focus on providing assistance to better manage existing resources and assist local governments through incentives for creating and maintaining permanent housing essential to reducing homelessness.

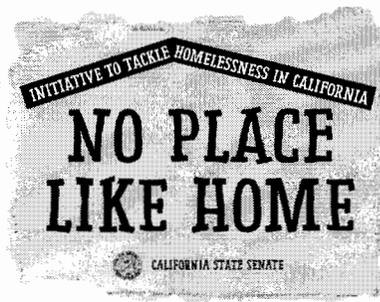
The Senate proposal supports a “housing first” strategy – an approach that has been proven successful in other states.

Secure Housing. We’ve seen it work wherever it has been tried, and homelessness experts agree: when you provide safe, secure housing to the homeless, it becomes easier to reach them to provide all of the other services they need.

Mental Health Support. Mental illness is bad enough without compounding it with homelessness. The longer many people remain homeless, the worse their mental illnesses get and the harder it is to reach them.

By getting people off the streets, we can revitalize neighborhoods and disrupt the ecosystem that leads to homelessness.





“No Place Like Home” Resolution

WHEREAS, California has the largest homeless population in the nation at 114,000; comprising 22 percent of the country's homeless;

WHEREAS, California has one third of the nation's chronically homeless, those with mental illness or other significant problems;

WHEREAS, of the 28,000 chronically homeless nearly 85 percent are unsheltered, with this group creating the greatest strain on tax dollars, often more than \$100,000 per person annually for emergency room visits, hospital stays, law enforcement, and other public services;

WHEREAS, most, if not all, California counties and cities have experienced the negative affects homelessness can have on businesses, government resources, community safety and wellbeing, and neighborhood quality of life;

WHEREAS, California's homeless problem is in stark contrast to its ranking as seventh largest economy in the world and the compassion aspired to in the “Golden State;”

WHEREAS, the California Senate has proposed a multi-pronged attack on homelessness with immediate and longer-term resources, while using with greater efficiency existing local, state, and federal dollars;

WHEREAS, the Senate plan embraces the “housing first” strategy that calls for safe, secure housing to create an environment where wrap-around services, such as mental health treatment, can take hold;

WHEREAS, for a homeless person living without shelter, the key to a home can open a future of hope for restored health and successful reintegration into society;

WHEREAS, the Senate proposes a \$2 billion bond to construct permanent housing for chronically homeless people with mental illnesses, paid for using less than 7 percent of the \$2 billion generated annually by Proposition 63;

WHEREAS, the Senate also proposes \$200 million in general fund money to provide shorter-term housing, including rent subsidies;

WHEREAS, the Senate also proposes support of the “Bringing Families Home” pilot program to reduce homelessness among families, and the CalWORKS Housing Support Program, which provides services and housing for CalWORKS families in danger of homelessness;

WHEREAS, the Senate also proposes an increase in Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) to prevent homelessness among the blind, aged, and disabled poor who cannot work, while providing a one-time investment to assist local governments in outreach efforts to get more eligible people enrolled in SSI/SSP; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED that (Name of the City/County/Organization) strongly support the Senate proposal on homelesses and that this position be communicated to the appropriate legislative policy and or fiscal committees as well as the Governor's office.