



**WESTERN
CENTER**
ON LAW & POVERTY



**HOUSING
CALIFORNIA**



December 6, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly

The Honorable Kevin de León
Senate President pro Tempore

Speaker Rendon and President pro Tempore de León:

Since the conclusion of the previous legislative session, an estimated 130,000 people were homeless on any given night. One in 10 California State University students started school without a place to call home. Housing costs were reported to be responsible for massive teacher shortages. 1.5 million of the state's most vulnerable people and families went without necessities such as food or medicine to pay their rent.

Californians need homes they can afford in order to raise healthy families and access educational and employment opportunities. Businesses demand homes affordable to workers to stay competitive and fulfill our state's economic potential. As organizations representing the people who build affordable homes and the people who need them, we implore you to put a comprehensive plan to build and preserve affordable homes at the top of the Legislature's agenda for the session that begins today.

While the size of California's affordable housing gap is daunting, the Legislature has the tools to make a significant difference in the lives of people struggling to pay the rent. A comprehensive plan to ensure an adequate supply of housing affordable to all Californians must include:

- Enforcing existing laws that require all jurisdictions to support the production of housing affordable to lower- and moderate- income people and families.
- Protecting existing affordable housing and preventing displacement of lower-income people and families.
- Ensuring local governments zone enough land for the development of affordable housing as required under existing law.
- Creating a stable, ongoing source of public funding for affordable homes to leverage additional public and private investment.
- Establishing incentives to encourage local governments to plan for and approve homes affordable to lower- and moderate- income people and families and establishing consequences for those jurisdictions that do not.

We know that both houses are considering proposals for new funding mechanisms for affordable housing and we applaud these efforts, which will provide critically needed seed money for new construction and other purposes. However, lack of funds is not the only reason for California's affordability crisis. In keeping with the framework highlighted above, we urge leadership of both houses to help advance proposals that address enforcement, preservation and tenant protection, zoning, and incentives that truly promote and maintain housing affordable to all Californians.

Our organizations have been working diligently to prepare for the introduction of Legislation to begin to significantly address the housing affordability crisis in California with tools that address the roots of the housing crisis – from development financing to land use to enforcement. We expect to work with you closely in the coming months to ensure the opportunity to meet the urgent housing needs of Californians does not go unrealized.

Sincerely,

Ray Pearl, California Housing Consortium
Anya Lawler, Western Center on Law and Poverty
Lisa Hershey, Housing California
Brian Augusta, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation