



February 10, 2021

The Honorable Ben Allen
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SCA 2 (Allen) – Public Housing Projects – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen,

East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO) is pleased to support SCA 2, which remedies our state's history of racial exclusion and provides a path out of our housing affordability crisis by repealing Article 34 of the California Constitution. This anachronistic and racially motivated aspect of our law makes it more difficult to build affordable housing by subjecting it to an onerous public vote. Affordable housing is not only a critical tool to protect against COVID-19 now, but also a foundation for our state's health and success ahead. We are grateful to all of our state leaders for developing emergency solutions while continuing to advance long-range solutions for all of our communities.

EBHO is a non-profit, member-driven organization with over 500 organizational and individual members. For 35 years, we have worked to preserve, protect, and create affordable housing opportunities for low-income communities in the East Bay by educating, advocating, organizing, and building coalitions. We believe that solutions to California's severe housing crisis must be comprehensive. As such, we support a multi-pronged effort based on the three principles of production of new housing, preservation of existing housing that is affordable, and protection of residents from unaffordable rent increases, eviction, displacement, and homelessness.

Since being added in 1950, Article 34 has blocked new housing and has been detrimental to the affordable housing industry. It has also enabled and reinforced patterns of racial exclusion, particularly from higher opportunity communities. Repeal is long overdue. According to the *L.A. Times*, compliance with Article 34 can add between \$10,000 and \$80,000 to the cost of low-income housing development. Without repeal, the California Constitution currently prohibits the development, construction, or acquisition of a low-rent housing development until a majority of the qualified electors of the city, town, or county subject the proposed development to a vote. Other forms of housing do not face similar impediments, making it clear

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that this law is still discriminatory in both impact and intent. It should have no place in California today.

We thank you for introducing this bill and look forward to working to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Levin".

Jeffrey Levin
Policy Director