



April 2, 2021

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
California State Assembly
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0045

RE: AB 1487 (Gabriel) – Eviction: Education, Outreach, and Legal Services: Short-Term Rental Assistance – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Gabriel,

East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO) is pleased to support AB 1487, which funds evidence-based local programs to provide low-income and vulnerable tenants with legal information, services, and eviction defense. These programs have proven highly effective at discouraging evictions, which have harmful impacts of evictions on individuals, families, communities, and municipalities.

EBHO is a non-profit, member-driven organization with over 300 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.

Nationwide, an estimated 90% of landlords go into an eviction case with an attorney. For tenants, the opposite is true; 90% having no legal representation. However, when tenants receive legal representation, they are much more likely to remain housed or, if they need to move, receive more time or financial resources to do so. Even more troubling, many tenants "self-evict" before ever going to court for an unlawful detainer case because they don't fully understand their rights and recourse. In recent years, the Legislature has advanced important new policies in the arena of tenants' rights and protections, including in response to COVID-19. However, without effective means of informing tenants of those rights—and defending them against eviction or harassment, when necessary—these policies can't live up their promise.

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COVID-19 has underscored the nexus between evictions, displacement, overcrowding, and negative health outcomes. Therefore, it's more important than ever to ensure that we lift up successful models of tenant outreach, education, and legal aid to prevent low-income tenants and residents of color—who are disproportionately targeted for eviction—from unnecessarily becoming displaced or forced into overcrowded quarters. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, it's critical the State use its unprecedented budget surplus to invest in the housing stability of low-income renters and an equitable recovery that's shared by all Californians. AB 1487 would do that by ensuring that renters can access legal information and services when they need them, regardless of income or immigration status.

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

Sincerely,

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

Alex Werth
Policy Associate