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April 2, 2024

Senator Aisha Wahab, Chair
Senate Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 1011 (Jones)

Dear Chair Wahab:

On behalf of [REDACTED], I am writing in strong opposition to Senate Bill 1011 (Jones). SB 1011 would prohibit under state penal code the act of sitting, lying, sleeping, or storing personal property on any street or sidewalk if a homeless shelter is “available” and within 500 feet of any public or private school, open space, or major transit stop. This bill would result in devastating impacts on people who are unhoused, while failing to achieve any legitimate policy purpose.

In [a recent report](#) measuring the effectiveness of a Los Angeles City ordinance criminalizing people experiencing houselessness, the LA Homeless Services Authority analysis showed the City spent millions on enforcement, only to have people removed from City streets under the law return to locations where they previously lived, or to move only blocks away. In fact, 81 percent of people removed forcibly, ticketed, or arrested returned to the same location where police cited them. The ordinance also made the job of homeless service providers harder, as outreach workers lost contact with clients they were serving, people lost their identification and other documentation due to forced removal or arrest, very few received shelter, and the City inconsistently enforced the law.

The bill is based on discriminatory beliefs that people who are unhoused should be barred near parks or schools due to their propensity for crime. [LAPD records](#) and [Washington State housing records](#), the few law enforcement entities that have published comparisons, show people who are homeless are no more likely to commit crimes than people who are housed. [Public health records](#) also show people who are unhoused are more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators.

The bill would also have devastating impacts on people who are unhoused and our homeless response system, with no benefit. A mapping analysis shows that SB 1011 would ban unhoused people from large swaths of urban and rural areas, pushing them into suburban communities, less densely populated suburban areas that are relatively devoid of services.

SB 1011’s approach promotes an increase in harmful police interactions for Black and brown Californians by empowering police to stop people when they, for example, “sit,” “use,” and “place personal property upon a street or sidewalk.” SB 1011 would enable racial profiling and the criminalization of Black boys and men of any housing status who [congregate on street corners](#) or wait at transit stops after school. Black people are up to 9.7 times more likely to be cited with such low-level infractions as their white counterparts. A recent [survey](#) also confirms

that a disproportionate percentage of unhoused Californians are Black and Indigenous. While about 7 percent of Californians identify as Black, 26 to [27](#) percent of unhoused Californians are Black and Indigenous people are twice as likely to experience houselessness.

The increasing number of Californians experiencing houselessness is due to our [dire shortage](#) of subsidized affordable housing, high [rental costs, and low rental vacancy rates](#). Indeed, in California, rental costs well exceed the income people receive. For example, individuals receiving SSI in California receive monthly payments of \$1,183 and people working full-time, making minimum wage, receive \$2,560. The [average household monthly income](#) required to afford average rent in California is \$7,323. For this reason, 78 percent of people with extremely low incomes are severely cost-burdened, paying more than half of their incomes on rent. Reducing the visibility of people who are unhoused, the number of people experiencing houselessness, and the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black and Indigenous populations requires investments in solutions proven that work, including investment in housing affordable to people in deep poverty, not punishment for inability to afford rent.

Finally, SB 1011 would require local governments that would rather spend resources on evidence-based solutions to homelessness to spend resources on enforcing SB 1011 instead. Even jurisdictions that would rather spend law enforcement resources on actually preventing or solving crimes would have to divert resources to clear encampments, fine, and arrest people who pose no more danger to the community than housed people.

For these reasons, we urge your “no” vote on this reactionary legislation.

Sincerely,



YOUR NAME