

SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER FOR AB 2547 (NAZARIAN)

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March 31, 2022

Assembly Member Buffy Wicks
Chair, Housing & Community Development Committee
1020 N Street, Room 156
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Assembly Bill 2547 (Nazarian)

Dear Chair Wicks:

On behalf of [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION], I am writing in strong support of AB 2547 (Nazarian). [ONE TO TWO SENTENCES ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION]. AB 2547 will further our organization's goals in preventing and ending homelessness among tens of thousands of older adults and people living with disabilities.

Older Californians as well as Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other special needs living on fixed incomes face increasing housing cost burdens, with roughly 8 out of 10 extremely low-income older renters paying more than half of their monthly income for rent. The disparity between income and housing costs has caused older adults to become the fastest growing age group experiencing homelessness in California, with 45% of California's homeless individuals now age 50 and older. This is particularly impacting African American/Black households, who are over six times more likely to become homeless than Californians as a whole.

An older adult experiencing chronic homelessness is likely to have health conditions and functional status similar to, or worse, than someone 10-20 years older. Moreover, as individuals experiencing homelessness age, they are likely to incur increasingly greater health care costs from hospitalization and nursing home placement. Similarly, because people with disabilities are far more likely to live in poverty, about 43% of those experiencing homelessness are living with a disability with around 1 in 5 of those individuals reporting having a developmental disability.

These startling statistics helped inform California's first Master Plan for Aging. Released in 2021, the MPA calls on California to expand housing and homelessness solutions for older adults and people with disabilities. The California Department of Aging is overseeing the implementation of the MPA.

AB 2547 will advance these goals through proven methodologies. It will create a program to fund housing vouchers to prevent older adults and people living with disabilities from falling into homelessness and to end experiences of homelessness among these populations. Data show housing subsidies are highly effective in preventing and ending homelessness. Further, in assessing eligibility for prevention resources, AB 2547 will rely on risk factors identified by the California Policy Lab, to ensure the State is targeting prevention resources to those at greatest risk. AB 2547 will fund best practices to ensure landlords in the private market and non-profit affordable housing market accept housing vouchers. Finally, the bill requires the administering agency, the California Department of Aging, to work with local housing authorities to convert State-funded housing vouchers to federal Housing Choice ("Section 8") turn-over vouchers, to ensure this five-year program can sustain participants in housing over the long term.

AB 2547 is thoughtful, strategic, and predicated on data and best practices. For these reasons, we urge your support for this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR TITLE]