January 29, 2020

Assemblymember Miguel Santiago
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Marilyn Limon

Re: Co-Sponsor Support Letter for Assembly Bill 1907 (Santiago)

Dear Assemblymember Santiago,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC), we are pleased to offer our support and co-sponsorship of Assembly Bill 1907 (Santiago). We are grateful for your office’s leadership on this issue.

LAHSA is responsible for funding a significant portion of the interim housing, permanent housing, and supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. As such, we believe AB 1907 would represent a significant step forward in addressing the homelessness and housing crisis facing our county and our state.

Los Angeles County faces not only an affordable housing crisis that leaves hundreds of thousands of Angelenos struggling with housing insecurity, but a homelessness crisis that threatens the health and safety of tens of thousands of residents who are without housing or a stable place to live.

According to the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, there are nearly 59,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given night in Los Angeles County. Approximately 75% of this population is unsheltered, residing in tents, makeshift shelters, vehicles, or entirely exposed to the elements. There is an urgent need to bring permanent housing solutions to this population in the form of supportive housing, rental subsidies, and other interventions. There is a corresponding need for shelter resources to meet the needs of the unsheltered population and create an appropriately scaled homeless system that efficiently moves people off the streets, into shelter, and subsequently into housing. Los Angeles must continue to open both supportive housing and shelter with alacrity to bring our neighbors indoors.

In addition, the shortage of affordable housing throughout the region continues to push more households into homelessness, even as we lift more households than ever off the streets and into housing. According to the California Housing Partnership, over 555,000 Los Angeles County households were extremely cost-burdened, paying over 50% of their income on rent. Nearly 90% of these households are very low income or below, placing them at risk of homelessness. Los Angeles (and California) will not find a long-term solution to homelessness without a significant increase in housing that is affordable to these very low income people.

AB 1907 would complement both short-term, immediate solutions to homelessness along with long-term, sustainable strategies to address homelessness. In the short-term, AB 1907 would remove barriers to opening new shelters throughout the state, protecting the health and safety of vulnerable Californians and giving them access to case management and services to assist them in their journey to housing.
In the longer term, AB 1907 would help create more resources to house the most acutely vulnerable, by removing local barriers and challenges to siting new supportive housing that meets key quality standards. In addition, and most importantly for solving California’s long-term housing challenges, AB 1907 would remove barriers to siting affordable housing developments. These developments serve as a critical bulwark against homelessness for vulnerable Californians and their families—few tools are as effective at homeless prevention as an affordable unit.

Thank you for your continued leadership on creating a more affordable, livable California for our neighbors. We look forward to working in the weeks and months ahead to support AB 1907 and help bring housing stability to households throughout Los Angeles County and across the state.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Heidi Marston
Interim Executive Director