May 26, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Governor  
State of California  
California State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker of the California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Kevin de León  
President pro Tempore of the  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Los Angeles County Trailer Bill Proposal to Help Counties Combat Homelessness

Governor Brown, Speaker Rendon and President pro Tempore de León

We, the undersigned, write in support of authorizing counties to seek voter approval to impose a special tax on personal incomes over $1 million dollars for purposes of providing housing and services for homeless individuals/families.

The state of California possesses more than one-third of the nation's chronically homeless population. Within our state, Los Angeles and San Francisco are the epicenters of this crisis, with estimates of over 50,000 homeless in Los Angeles, and more homeless per square mile in San Francisco than any other city nationwide, excluding New York City.

The problem in Los Angeles County has led the Board of Supervisors to declare a state of emergency, after 12% increases over the last two years in both the city and county of Los Angeles. The number of tents, makeshift encampments and vehicles occupied by homeless people soared 85%, to 9,535, according to biennial figures from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. The Los Angeles Unified School District reports that approximately 9,000 school age pupils are homeless. Since 2013, there has been a 55% increase in the number of women experiencing homelessness and women make up 61% of the overall homeless population increase since 2013.

These numbers prompted the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to direct the County’s Office of the Homeless Initiative to engage in hours of deliberations and public meetings for over nine months with community organizations, elected officials and a host of other stakeholders to develop a plan of action to address the growing homeless problem in Los Angeles County.

This plan included a survey of public opinions about revenue sources that voters may find appropriate, if given an opportunity to vote upon. Taxing personal incomes above $1 million polled at approximately 76% percent, and did not adversely affect the passage of an extension of Proposition 30. On May 17, 2016, the Board approved a motion to pursue budget trailer bill language to grant counties the authority to seek voter approval to impose a special tax on personal annual incomes above $1 million. This special tax would fund homeless services.

The level of homelessness in the state of California is quickly approaching pandemic levels and an unprecedented crisis deserves a thoughtful evaluation of extraordinary solutions. While Los Angeles County has proposed this bold new plan to significantly alleviate homelessness, the problem is not confined to Los Angeles and thus other counties should be afforded this self-help solution.
Sincerely,

Reginald Byron

Connie B. Leyva

Reggie

Robert A. Weikl

Mitchell

SD 30

A. M. Bradley-Thompson

Com. Itchea

AD 41

Senator Isadore Hall

Albin A. Azinger

SD 35

Kevin Mullen

AD 79

Laurel Craycraft

AD 46

Eveline

Ed Lang

Rob Bonta

AD 18

Tom Daly

AD 69

Kevin Scully

AD 25

Doreen Hill

AD 37

Cheryl Brown

AD 47