**AB 2176 (Campos)**

**Transitional Housing Community for the Homeless**

(As Amended 4/19/16)

**SUMMARY**

As the cost of housing continues to increase and vacancy rates remain low, immediate action is needed to help the thousands of people living in the streets of the City of San Jose.

AB 2176 would authorize the City of San Jose to develop a transitional housing community for the homeless if it declares that it is in a shelter crisis.

## **BACKGROUND ISSUE**

In 2015 the City of San Jose conducted a survey to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of homeless persons. This survey revealed that, although some improvement was made since 2013, the homeless population was still above 2011 numbers with over 4,000 homeless people. The survey also revealed that 33% of the homeless population was under the age of 25, and that 69% of the homeless were unsheltered.

Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible – and then providing services as needed. The vast majority of homeless individuals and families fall into homelessness after a housing or personal crisis. For these families and individuals, the Housing First approach is ideal, as it provides them with assistance to find permanent housing quickly and without conditions. As a result, these individuals need little support to achieve independence, saving the system considerable costs.

This approach has already proven successful around the country. The State of Utah reported in 2015 that the Housing First model reduced the ranks of the chronically homeless by 91%. Studies in New York City and in Utah have shown that every homeless person housed in programs such as Housing First saves taxpayers $10,000 and $8,000 a year, respectively.

The City of San Jose is currently exploring the possibility of establishing a transitional housing community to make use of the Housing First model. This community would provide a short-term solution for San Jose’s homeless residents, while higher-density permanent housing is built. The housing community would include zero footprint mini houses, compostable toilets, and a community center with full bathroom facilities, kitchens, and onsite supportive services.

However, the City’s Housing Department found that certain state codes and regulations prevented them from realizing this goal. The City is willing to establish local safety, health and habitability standards to ensure that a transitional housing community can operate safely, but it first needs the state to grant it the authority to do so.

# THIS BILL

AB 2176 would authorize the City of San Jose to prepare local building, housing, health, habitability, or safety standards, in lieu of such state laws, for the development of a transitional housing community.

Unlike models that propose to put people without dedicated resources into environments not meant for long-term habitation such as campgrounds, this transitional community alternative is a much more sound option, since any structure would provide better protection than a tent.

This model would provide the homeless community with a stable place to live while new permanent supportive housing, which is years in the making, can be financed and constructed.

**SUPPORT**

* City of San Jose
* Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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