[Place on your letterhead or include your address block]

[Insert Date]

Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry

State Capitol

P.O. Box 942849

Sacramento, CA 94249

**Re:  Support for ACA 4**

Dear Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry,

[Insert your organization's name] is writing to voice our support of Assembly Constitutional Amendment 4 which will enhance democracy by lowering the voter approval threshold to 55% for local affordable housing and infrastructure funding measures.

[Include 1-2 sentences to briefly describe your organization.] As a member of the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH), [your organization] joins with 750 affordable housing developers, advocates, community leaders and businesses, working to secure resources, promote good policy, educate the public, and support affordable homes as the foundation for thriving individuals, families and neighborhoods.

**California is Facing a Housing Affordability Crisis.**

While we believe that everyone should have access to a safe and affordable home, our state has fallen behind on creating these opportunities: Most of our families struggle to afford the cost of living in their local communities, including 50% of our moderate-income families. The most vulnerable of them risk joining the 134,000+ Californians who are already homeless on any given night.

[If appropriate, include 1-2 sentence highlighting a resident story or experience.]

This crisis has a direct toll on our economy as well. California loses $140 billion per year in output (or 6 percent of state GDP) due to the lack of affordable housing. Rents and mortgages within the reach of working families are critical to maintaining California’s business competitiveness, and prominent business groups across the state agree that California needs to increase affordable housing options.

**ACA 4 Enhances Local Communities’ Ability to Take Action on Housing**

Lowering the voter threshold for general obligation or special taxes to be dedicated to affordable housing will provide localities with a much-needed tool to address the housing affordability crisis. As you know, the California Constitution currently limits the potential for local communities to make decisions about affordable housing and infrastructure funding measures by requiring a two-thirds vote, regardless of how the city, county, or special district proposes to use the funds.

ACA 4 will allow local communities to vote on affordable housing and infrastructure funding measures as they currently do for local school district bonds, with a 55% vote threshold. Lowering the voter threshold to approve school bonds significantly improved opportunities for local school districts to secure important school construction and improvements, with local districts passing four out of every five school bonds between 2001 and 2013 with 55% or higher support. Lowering the voter approval threshold for affordable housing could lead to similar local opportunities.

**ACA 4 has clear accountability provisions**

ACA 4 will still require that local voters overwhelmingly support a bond or special tax in order for it to be approved, with 55% vote threshold. Further, ACA 4 will ensure clear accountability measures for any funds raised through the process including:

* A requirement that bond proceeds are not for any other purpose, including employee salaries or other operating expenses;
* A requirement for a list of the specific projects to be funded and certification by the local agency that that agency has evaluated alternative funding sources;
* A requirement that the local agency conduct an annual independent performance audit to ensure that the funds have been expended only on the specific listed projects;
* A requirement that the local agency conduct an annual, independent financial audit of the proceeds of the bonds until all of those proceeds have been expended for the public infrastructure projects;
* A requirement that the local agency post the audits in a manner easily accessible to the public; and,
* A requirement that the local agency appoint a citizens’ oversight committee to ensure that the bond proceeds are expended only for the purposes described in the measure approved by the voters.

ACA 4 will support affordable housing opportunities, enhance local communities’ ability to take local action, and retain strong accountability measures.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for authoring ACA 4.

Sincerely,

[Insert Your Full Name]

[Insert Your Title]

[Insert Your Organization’s Name]

To: Angela Pontes, Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry Office, (angela.pontes@asm.ca.gov)

Cc: Pedro Galvao, Regional Planning and Policy Manager, NPH (pedro@nonprofithousing.org)