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March 15, 2021

The Honorable Benjamin Allen  
State Capitol, Room 4076  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **HOAC Supports SCA 2**

Dear Senator Allen:

The Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), which represents the physician health officers of California's sixty-one city and county jurisdictions, supports your SCA 2, which would amend the Constitution to streamline the development of housing for lower-income residents.

Californians amended our Constitution in 1950 in direct response to the Federal Housing Act of 1949, which aimed to help lower-income families move out of slums and into better living situations after World War II. The amendment, Article 34, currently requires majority approval by the voters of a city or county for the development, construction, or acquisition of a publicly funded "low-rent housing project."

Forty percent of Californians live close to or below the poverty line, and nearly one-third spend more than half their income just for a place to live. Burdened by high housing costs, a financial setback for such families can spell catastrophe. Too many of our neighbors are one paycheck away from homelessness. Californians' attitudes have changed toward issues of race and ethnicity, class and poverty since Article 34 passed almost 70 years ago. It stands today as an anachronistic and expensive barrier that subjects local governments to a web of regulations and costly elections that drive up the price of building publicly financed affordable housing. Your constitutional amendment would remove an obstacle that undermines the ability of elected leadership to address California's current housing and homelessness challenges.

HOAC is dedicated to promoting practices that improve the health of all of California's residents; at our spring 2019 semiannual meeting in Petaluma, HOAC offered a day and half of Continuing Medical Education programs relating to homelessness and the role of the public health officer. Should you have any questions regarding our position on this matter, I invite you to contact me at your convenience.

Thank you for introducing this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kat DeBurgh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kat DeBurgh, MPH  
Executive Director