

AB-2417

California Interagency Council on Homelessness



Prepared by the
ELDERLY CARE
EVERYWHERE POLICY
TEAM



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Largest youth lobbying group for senior citizens and senior care in California.

Executive Summary

AB 2417, introduced by Assembly Members Hoover and Joe Patterson during the 2023-2024 Regular Session of the California Legislature, proposes significant changes to California's approach to addressing homelessness. The bill aims to amend Section 8255 and repeal Section 8256 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, altering requirements for state agencies in their homelessness programs.

Currently, the Housing First model emphasizes providing permanent housing to homeless individuals without preconditions like sobriety or employment. Housing First principles include non-discriminatory tenant screening, direct referrals from shelters, and supportive services without tenant compliance requirements. This model is based on evidence that stable housing enables individuals to address issues like substance abuse, mental health, and unemployment.

AB 2417 seeks to repeal the requirement for state agencies to incorporate Housing First components, allowing more flexibility in developing strategies to address homelessness. This flexibility could enable alternative methods tailored to specific community needs, including traditional models or innovative approaches. These methods might provide more opportunities for agencies to experiment with models that could be more effective for certain populations.

Removing Housing First mandates allows agencies to implement programs with housing conditions, such as substance abuse treatment or employment participation, currently not permitted. This could lead to varied approaches and significant changes in services provided to homeless individuals, resulting in greater variability in support across different areas. Some regions might find success in integrating more comprehensive service requirements, while others may benefit from maintaining more flexible approaches.

The bill retains the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, continuing its role in coordinating state efforts to address homelessness but without strict Housing First adherence. The council will still create partnerships among state agencies, local governments, federal agencies, and private entities to develop strategies to end homelessness. This collaboration is intended to ensure a unified and effective approach, even with increased flexibility in program implementation.

In summary, AB 2417 represents a shift in California's homelessness policy, moving away from a uniform Housing First model to empower local agencies with the flexibility to develop strategies meeting their unique needs. This change could foster innovation and tailored solutions, encouraging agencies to find the most effective methods for their communities. However, it may also lead to inconsistencies in services for homeless individuals across the state, with varying levels of support depending on the region.



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Our Position

Assembly Bill No. 2417 (AB 2417) seeks to dismantle key components of California's current approach to homelessness by repealing Housing First policies. Introduced by Assembly Members Hoover and Joe Patterson, this bill proposes changes that could harm the state's homeless population. AB 2417 aims to amend Section 8255 and repeal Section 8256 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, removing the requirement for state agencies to incorporate core components of Housing First. The Housing First model has been instrumental in providing permanent housing to homeless individuals without preconditions like sobriety or employment. This model is based on evidence that stable housing enables individuals to address issues such as substance abuse, mental health, and unemployment.

Opposing AB 2417 is crucial because repealing Housing First policies would undermine progress in addressing homelessness. Housing First principles include non-discriminatory tenant screening, direct referrals from shelters, and supportive services without tenant compliance requirements. These principles have proven effective in providing a secure foundation for individuals to access necessary services.

Allowing agencies to implement programs with housing conditions, such as mandatory substance abuse treatment or employment participation, could lead to varied and inconsistent approaches. This could result in some regions adopting more punitive measures that may not address the root causes of homelessness. The flexibility proposed by AB 2417 might create disparities in support and services for homeless individuals depending on their location.

Moreover, removing Housing First mandates could discourage the use of evidence-based practices successful in reducing homelessness. The current model emphasizes engagement and problem-solving over punitive measures, essential for building trust and encouraging participation in supportive services. Retaining these mandates ensures a consistent and humane approach to homelessness.

The California Interagency Council on Homelessness plays a critical role in coordinating state efforts. AB 2417's proposal to continue the council's work without strict Housing First adherence could dilute its effectiveness. The council's ability to create partnerships and develop strategies relies on a unified approach that Housing First provides.

In conclusion, opposing AB 2417 is vital to preserve progress made through the Housing First model. Repealing these policies risks creating inconsistent and harmful approaches, undermining efforts to provide stable housing and support services. A unified and evidence-based strategy is crucial for effectively addressing homelessness and ensuring all Californians have the opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity.



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Letter of Opposition for AB-2417

June 1, 2024

The Honorable Christopher M. Ward, Chair
Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to AB 2417

Dear Chair Ward and Members of the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development,

On behalf of Elderly Care Everywhere, I write to express our strong opposition to AB 2417, which aims to repeal the core components of the Housing First policy in addressing homelessness in California. While the bill seeks to enhance the flexibility of funding for treatment and service-oriented programs, we believe that AB 2417 could undermine the progress made in securing stable housing for the most vulnerable populations, including senior citizens.

California's Housing First approach has been instrumental in prioritizing immediate access to permanent housing without preconditions. This model has been proven effective in reducing homelessness and providing a foundation for individuals to access additional support services, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Housing First has led to significant reductions in chronic homelessness and has improved outcomes for those in supportive housing.

AB 2417 proposes a shift away from this evidence-based approach, which could result in increased instability and homelessness among senior citizens. The flexibility that AB 2417 seeks to introduce must not come at the expense of the fundamental principle that housing is a human right and a basic need that should be met unconditionally.

We strongly urge you to vote against AB 2417 and continue to support policies that ensure immediate and unconditional access to housing for our senior citizens and other vulnerable populations. Upholding the principles of Housing First is essential to building a more inclusive and supportive community for all Californians.

Sincerely,
Aakrisht Mehra
Founder/CEO
Elderly Care Everywhere



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About Elderly Care Everywhere

Elderly Care Everywhere is a transformative nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of senior citizens. Since its inception, the organization has positively impacted over 40,000 seniors through a variety of programs aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

Elderly Care Everywhere has been instrumental in alleviating hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical debt, ensuring that seniors have access to the healthcare they need without the burden of financial stress. With more than 20 chapters across the United States, the organization extends its reach and resources to numerous communities, providing support and advocacy on a national scale.

Beyond U.S. borders, Elderly Care Everywhere has established flood relief camps in India, showcasing its commitment to global humanitarian efforts. The organization's impactful work has been recognized by the government of New Delhi, further highlighting its significant contributions to senior care and welfare. Through these efforts, Elderly Care Everywhere continues to lead the way in senior advocacy, ensuring that the elderly are treated with dignity and respect worldwide.

If you have any questions, feel free
to email us at
connect@elderlycareeverywhere.org