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The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1079 (Menjivar) – Youth Housing Bond Fund Act of 2024 – SUPPORT
LOCATION: Senate Appropriations Suspense File

Dear Senator Caballero:

[Organization name] is pleased to support SB 1079 (Menjivar), which will combat homelessness and housing instability for California's most vulnerable youth. By prioritizing building housing and supporting capital expenditures for necessary equipment for youth housing, SB 1079 will increase the availability and accessibility of youth housing to help stem the pipeline of youth homelessness to chronic adult homelessness.

Add information about your organization and connection to this issue.

Housing instability and homelessness significantly hinder the pursuit of higher education, meaningful employment, and self-sufficiency for transition aged youth. For example, in Chapin Hall's CalYouth study, over 35% of youth reported they experienced homelessness while actively enrolled in extended foster care. And, 68.2% of California's unaccompanied homeless youth are unsheltered. Homelessness among some groups of youth is significantly disproportionate – up to 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+. Among racial and ethnic groups, African American youth were especially overrepresented, with an 83% increased risk of having experienced homelessness over youth of other races. Further, some data has shown that 50% of the chronically homeless population had their first experience of homelessness when they were under the age of 25.

The purpose of extended foster care is to prevent homelessness among youth as they enter early adulthood. However, without sufficient supported housing, youth are struggling to attain housing. Failure to support youth while they are in extended foster care and our transition aged youth experiencing homelessness results in increased chronic homelessness and disconnection as adults.

Non-profit community-based organizations provide support to individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness through targeted services. Invested in improving communities, these organizations are experts in identifying the specific housing needs, gaps and coordinate efforts to support transition aged youth as they transition to stable housing.

This proposal builds on previous investments in creating safe and available housing for our state's at-risk youth. SB 1079 will address the ongoing need to develop housing to support current and former foster youth and youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness. According to the California Homeless Youth Project, there are only enough beds for 24% of the state's transition age youth population experiencing homelessness and only 5% for unaccompanied homeless minors. Just over 3% of the State's beds from the 2023 Housing Inventory Count are for homeless youth.

SB 1079 will increase housing stability and enhance the impact of California's investments in housing for youth by creating a dedicated funding source, the Youth Housing Bond Fund Act of 2024, to combat youth homelessness, and by allowing both public agencies and community-based organizations with specific youth expertise to directly apply for the youth bond funds.

For the reasons noted above, [Organization] supports SB 1079 and requests your favorable consideration of this measure by allowing it to move to the Senate Floor.

Sincerely,

[Name, Title]

cc: Members and Staff, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Menjivar