



September 12, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 4 - Affordable Housing on Faith and Higher Education Lands Act - Request for Signature

Dear Governor Newsom,

The Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH), the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing (SCANPH), the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC), and the Inner City Law Center write to request your signature on Senate Bill (SB) 4, the Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act. This measure would make building affordable housing easier, faster, and cheaper on land owned by faith-based institutions and nonprofit colleges.

Across California, faith-based organizations and nonprofit colleges are seeking to partner with affordable housing developers to build critically needed affordable homes on their land. These faith-based organizations are long-standing community anchors and are driven by their values to support those most in need and help address our homelessness crisis.

Unfortunately, the land that these organizations own can often be locked into complicated and cost-prohibitive local zoning rules and regulations. These can range from standards that allow only a few units to be built on large parcels to others that limit any housing construction. The variety of red tape and obstacles make the development financially infeasible and discourage institutions from moving forward with projects that would benefit their low-income and unhoused neighbors.

Per a study by the UC Berkeley Turner Center, there are over 171,000 potentially developable acres statewide owned by faith institutions or nonprofit colleges, which is nearly five times the size of the city of Oakland. A significant share of that acreage is located in the state's "high" or "highest" resource opportunity areas, signaling an opportunity for building housing in neighborhoods with lower poverty rates and greater economic, educational, and environmental amenities. This land can play a key role in addressing our housing needs.

A 2022 report from the California Department of Housing and Community Development found that we need to build 1.2 million affordable homes over the next decade to meet our housing goals. Over the

last few years, California has added an average of 19,000 affordable units a year. At this pace we will not reach our state goals without increased streamlining for affordable housing production.

In response, SB 4 will streamline the building process and offer new tools for neighborhood leaders to build safe, stable, affordable homes for local residents and families. This bill will allow places of worship to build 100% affordable housing projects, creating a valuable option in the midst of the state's housing and homelessness crises.

Equally important, this Act will help our state's construction workforce rise and thrive. The bill will pull all construction workers up by providing them good-paying jobs with family medical benefits, while building our way out of this housing crisis. Construction workers will be protected by the requirement to pay prevailing wages. On projects with at least 50 units, contractors must offer apprentices employment and pay for health care for construction workers and their dependents. This creates an economic base and new opportunities for construction workers and provides our state with the highly skilled workforce it needs to build our future.

This is a common-sense opportunity for us to partner with trusted community leaders. The catastrophic homeless tragedies we see on the street every day call for urgent and bold action and signing this bill will continue your leadership in tackling California's most fundamental problem. We thank you for your leadership on these critical housing and homelessness issues and urge your signature of this bill.

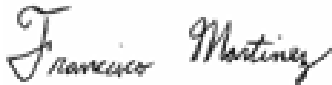
Sincerely,



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Francisco Martinez
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