



## **IN BRIEF**

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SB 591 would increase the production of affordable housing units and address homelessness by allowing affordable housing developers to build intergenerational housing serving seniors along with foster youth (also known as transition age youth or TAY). This legislation will provide seniors and TAY with housing, while at the same time addressing isolation and depression in seniors and homelessness for teens.

## **BACKGROUND**

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As it relates to financing affordable housing, the options to pay for and build these projects are limited. Previously, tax credits were used to help finance senior affordable housing for people age 55 and older, though it came with a restriction that prohibited the financing of other types of affordable units in the same building. An affordable housing project aimed at serving seniors could not include some units for transition-aged youth, despite the well documented social and health benefits to seniors associated with building some units for TAY in the same building. Without that opportunity, seniors are missing opportunities to access social and health benefits and services.

## **THE PROBLEM**

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A growing body of scientific research has linked social isolation and loneliness in seniors to higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions and this was before the start of COVID 19 and the Shelter in Place requirements. Research shows that when seniors move into independent living environments, they lose social and physical connections to the outside world. According to the National Institute on Aging, losing a sense of connection changes a person’s perspective of the world, causing social isolation and loneliness, which is linked to a variety of mental and physical conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, Alzheimer’s disease and even death. It is vital that housing developments incorporate active, therapeutic, and social activities to keep seniors engaged and active.

In addition, foster youth are a vulnerable population in our state. There are over 60,000 youth in the foster care system that are waiting to find a family and a

home. Each year around 3,500 Transition-Age Youth (TAY) exit foster care without having found a permanent home, causing emotional and cognitive dysfunction due to the lack of housing, food, safety, and difficulty reintegrating into society. Unfortunately,

foster youth are the fastest growing homeless population in California, which puts them at risk of poverty and incarceration.

## **THE SOLUTION**

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SB 591 will provide financing opportunities that will allow seniors and youth to live in the same affordable housing complex which will also help reduce youth homelessness. This legislation will let California create a space for seniors and youth to interact and pave the way towards having multiple generations learning together while providing vulnerable individuals a place to live. The benefits are mutual, and this living situation creates a community that traditional forms of age-restricted housing cannot match.

## **SUPPORT**

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The City of Emeryville (Sponsor)

AARP

California Apartment Association

California Alliance for Retired Americans

City of Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin

City of Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf

EAH Housing

Non-Profit Housing Association

Mentis

MidPen Housing

The People Concern

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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