



# BEN BARTLETT

CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

## CONSENT CALENDAR

April 20, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author), Councilmember Taplin  
(Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Letter in support of AB 816 “State and Local Agencies: Homelessness Plan”

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Mayor of Berkeley and Members of City Council supports AB 816 “State and Local Agencies: Homelessness Plan” by sending a letter of support to Assemblymember David Chiu, State Senator Nancy Skinner, and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks to express the City of Berkeley’s support for AB 816.

### BACKGROUND

AB-816 will require a statewide needs and gap analysis to be conducted, identify state programs that provide housing or service to unhoused persons and create a financial model that will assess investment needs for the purpose of moving persons who are experiencing homelessness into permanent housing. Cities throughout the Bay Area contain large homeless populations. We as a regional community need to work collectively with the state to solve our homeless problems. Any neighboring cities homelessness will impact our Berkeley community and nearby Oakland’s homelessness rate has now climbed to 940 per 100,000 people, which is higher than either San Francisco’s rate, at 906, or Berkeley’s rate, at 898<sup>1</sup>. The bill will require the coordinating council to report on the analysis by July 31, 2022. The Department of Community and Housing Development will set a benchmark goal for reducing homelessness by January 1, 2029. Each local agency will be required to submit an actionable county-level plan to meet specified annual benchmarks and the state benchmark goal. Local agencies will be required to submit an annual progress report to the department that details progress, implementation and any amendments to the proposed plan. A Housing and Homelessness Inspector General, within the department will be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate who will be able to bring an action against the state, local agency or city that fails to adopt the plan.

### CURRENT SITUATION

The Housing Crisis in California is well established. However, the number of unhoused persons continue to rise with over 150,000 people experiencing homelessness daily<sup>2</sup>. Homelessness in the City of Berkeley and throughout the Bay Area has also been rising at an increasing rate. Berkeley currently has 1,108 homeless residents, of whom 813 were living on the street (as of a

<sup>1</sup> <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fEmluh-i2RJsu1s9T5SuNdYIAwWNKIJeJiDEpSomGE/edit>

<sup>2</sup> <https://steinberginstitute.org/press-release/assemblymember-chiu-introduces-bill-to-create-a-legal-obligation-to-reduce-homelessness-in-california/>

point-in-time count in January 2019). This represents a 14% increase in two years.<sup>3</sup> California homelessness is significantly higher than other states, according to statistics done by the USICH<sup>4</sup>. During the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the issue of homelessness becomes even more urgent. California is experiencing two simultaneously occurring public health crises-- COVID-19 and homelessness. Due to a lack of access to shelter, unhoused persons have difficulty practicing effective personal hygiene routines<sup>5</sup>. As a result, unhoused persons are at a significantly higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and spreading it to other community members. To address this threat to public health, the State of California must direct funding and policy efforts towards addressing and ending the issue of homelessness.

#### REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS, PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND LAWS

Existing law requires the Governor to create the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (referred to as “the coordinating council”) and to appoint up to 19 members of that council, as provided. Existing law specifies the duties of the coordinating council, including creating partnerships among state agencies <sup>6</sup>.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The passage of AB-816 would benefit the City of Berkeley and the community through addressing the homelessness crisis. Homelessness has clearly been a large issue in Berkeley and local officials have taken action for the homeless community most recently during the shelter in place order<sup>7</sup>. By supporting this bill, Berkeley will be able to address homelessness through and with the support and collaboration of the county, neighboring cities, and the state.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No impact.

#### FISCAL IMPACTS

Staff time to review/edit letters and postage.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Ben Bartlett:	510-981-7130
Xitlali Parada	510-981-7135
James Chang	510-918-7131

#### ATTACHMENTS AND MATERIALS

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<sup>3</sup> [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TtUajFluEAeqB\\_A8vkJ03Y4Jw5cpPI-2M1sgggG-Bg/edit#heading=h.3fwt2yc1do](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TtUajFluEAeqB_A8vkJ03Y4Jw5cpPI-2M1sgggG-Bg/edit#heading=h.3fwt2yc1do)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics/ca/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://community.solutions/understanding-public-health-and-homelessness/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB816](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB816)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dailycal.org/2020/04/10/berkeley-homeless-community-struggles-amid-covid-19-city-responds/>

1. Letter to Assemblymember Chiu.

Attachment 1:

XX,XX,20XX

The Honorable Assemblymember Chiu  
State Capitol Office, Room 4112  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249

Re: City of Berkeley's support for AB-816 State and local agencies: homelessness plan.-  
SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Chiu:

The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Berkeley City Council are pleased to support Assembly Bill 816 (AB-816). AB-816 will identify and hold accountability towards local entities to address homelessness and create an actionable plan to reduce homelessness by January 1, 2029.

It is vital that California comes together to address homelessness and reduce its numbers. By passing a bill that will closely monitor local and city entities' progress, it is clear that AB-816 will ensure California reduces homelessness and supports a community in need. For these reasons, we strongly support AB-816.

Respectfully,  
The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Berkeley City Council

Jesse Arreguin  
Mayor, City of Berkeley

Members of the Berkeley City Council

