

April 7, 2021

The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
Chair, Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs
1020 N Street, Room 389
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 411 (Irwin) Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2022 - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Irwin,

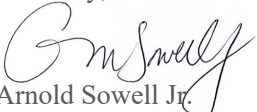
NextGen California is pleased to support your AB 411, which establishes the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention (VHHP) Act of 2022 and places a \$600 million general obligation bond to provide affordable housing for veterans and their families on the June 2022 ballot.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the chronic homelessness crisis in California, especially among our veteran population. Earlier this year, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released its Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). This report compiles nationwide data on homelessness, including the demographic characteristics of state homeless populations. The recent AHAR paints a stark picture of California's homeless veterans' problem -- our state has more than 11,000 veterans who experience homelessness, which accounts for the highest nationwide total at 31 percent of any state homeless veterans' population in the United States.¹

AB 411 will help address this crisis by reauthorizing funding for the VHHP program which was overwhelmingly supported by voters in 2014. The VHHP program targets bond funding to provide multifamily, transitional, and supportive housing for homeless veterans. The program has proven to be exceptionally successful. Specifically, in the last five rounds of funding, more than 2,600 housing units have been made available to California veterans, at an average per-unit cost of roughly \$127,000. With the reauthorization of this funding through AB 411, the VHHP Program will be extended for many years, allowing it to continue its very effective work housing and improving the lives of our state's homeless veterans.

AB 411 will ask voters to continue the VHHP program, one of our state's most successful programs for fighting veterans homelessness. NextGen California supports programs and policies that address homelessness and is deeply committed to honoring the sacrifice of the men and women who risked their lives to serve, protect, and defend our country. We're proud to support AB 411 and thank you for bringing this critical bill forward.

Sincerely,



Arnold Sowell Jr.
Executive Director, NextGen California

cc: Members, Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

¹The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development. The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. January 2021. Accessed: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>