

March 30, 2021

The Honorable Mark Stone  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Judiciary  
1020 N Street, Room 104  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1487 (Gabriel) The Tenant Protection and Homeless Prevention Act - SUPPORT

**Dear Chair Stone,**

NextGen California is pleased to support AB 1487, which would create the Tenant Protection and Homelessness Prevention Act. Specifically, the bill would establish a statewide eviction defense program to support local efforts to provide legal representation to at-risk tenants. The eviction defense program would be funded through a grant program to provide funding to local governments and qualified non-profit organizations seeking to provide assistance to tenants facing possible eviction. AB 1487 would also award grants for education and outreach services to at-risk tenants in an effort to prevent the eviction process from ever beginning.

Evictions and displacements are important factors contributing to California's housing and homelessness crisis. Temporary moratoria on evictions and foreclosures during the COVID-19 pandemic have only delayed the looming issue of mass increases in the number of evictions statewide. In fact, as many as 240,000 evictions are expected to be processed this year despite the moratorium.<sup>1</sup>

Existing eviction defense programs operating around the state have been very successful in keeping individuals housed. For instance, the 2020 report from the San Francisco Right to Counsel Program showed that 67 percent of tenants were able to stay in their homes due to the legal representation received from that program.<sup>2</sup> Among Black tenants, over 80 percent were able to stay in their home as a result of representation.<sup>3</sup> Eviction defense programs are also a cost effective investment for local jurisdictions. Los Angeles currently operates the LA Eviction Defense Program, which has been successful in helping tenants avoid eviction and saving local governments the cost embedded in the eviction process as well. For example, a 2019 report of the LA Eviction Defense Program estimated that for every dollar spent on the eviction defense program, Los Angeles would receive approximately \$3.50 in the avoided costs of emergency shelters, local rehousing programs, and providing mental and healthcare services to homeless individuals.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. <https://nlihc.org/coronavirus-and-housing-homelessness/eviction-update> see "California".

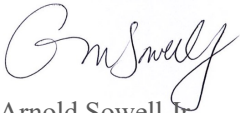
<sup>2</sup> City and County of San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development. 2019-2020 Annual Progress Report. Accessed: <https://sfmohcd.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Reports/MOHCD%20Annual%20Progress%20Report%20FY2019-20%20Final-compressed%20%281%29.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. Accessed: [http://civilrighttocounsel.org/major\\_developments/1273](http://civilrighttocounsel.org/major_developments/1273)

AB 1487 is a big step in the effort to ensure that every Californian can have access to legal services to avoid the possibility of eviction, remain housed, and avoid falling into homelessness. Many of the policies that prevent eviction and displacement are temporary in nature and tied to the COVID-19 pandemic, making the program established under AB 1487 even more necessary to help stem a potentially catastrophic increase in the number of evictions. For these reasons, we respectfully request your “aye” vote on AB 1487.

Sincerely,



Arnold Sowell Jr.

Executive Director, NextGen California

Cc: Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee