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**Affordable Housing for the Elderly: Shared Housing**

Studies across America have shown a clear upward trend in the proportion of persons aged 50-64 among the homeless population. Few options are available to adequately house homeless Seniors who may exist solely on Social Security (SS) or State Supplemental Income (SSI) and cannot pay current housing rental rates. This proposal seeks to maximize existing housing by encouraging cities and counties to implement shared housing programs to address senior homelessness and at the same time make progress towards their Affordable Housing goals.

Low income Seniors who find themselves “homeless” are being squeezed at both ends of the housing spectrum. Rental units in California are priced well above 30% of senior’s income levels. Section 8 Housing programs have a constant shortage of one bedroom options, and two bedroom housing is beyond the means of most seniors living on SS or SSI. Buying a house is even more difficult for anyone living on a fixed income, let alone a senior.

According to NationalHomeless.org, “Studies across America have shown a clear upward trend in the proportion of persons aged 50-64 among the homeless population”. These are persons who are not yet old enough for many of the support programs available to seniors aged 62 and above, ie Subsidized Housing-62, Medicare-65,

Social Security-62.

If the future of affordable housing in California is caught between the NIMBYs (Not in My Back Yard) and those who oppose affordable dwellings as a counterproductive tax on Housing creation, the problem of elder homelessness is bound to increase.

Home Sharing, can make a dent in the ever-increasing need for affordable homes for seniors, while perhaps preventing some seniors whose fixed income cannot keep up with growing costs of homeownership from becoming homeless themselves.

Home Sharing is a simple idea: a homeowner offers accommodation to a home sharer in exchange for an agreed level of support in the form of financial exchange, assistance with household tasks, or both.

Home Sharing programs can offer a more secure alternative to other roommate options. Many programs have staff who are trained to carefully screen each program applicant through interviewing, background checking, and personal references, as well as Case Managers to assist in cementing the match.

However, home sharing programs need financial and political support in order to offer both matching services and support to insure the match succeeds. This proposal creates an incentive for Cities and Counties to provide that support.

This proposal requests that the Governor and the California Legislature pass a law to change Department of Urban Housing and Development (HUD) rules to allow placements of homeless seniors and/or people with disabilities into Shared Housing to be counted towards Affordable Housing goals for Cities and Counties.