



Susan Wengraf  
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR  
January 16, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Vice Mayor Susan Wengraf, Councilmember Sophie Hahn, Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani

Subject: City of Berkeley Support for Proposition 1 on March 5, 2024 Ballot

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution in Support of California State Proposition 1 and request that the City Manager issue a press release indicating the City's support.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

BACKGROUND

Proposition 1 is a combination of two bills Governor Newsom signed on October 12, 2023. SB-326 (Eggman) and AB-531 (Irwin) are aimed at addressing the State's mental health crisis. The bills are packaged together into Proposition 1 for voters to approve in the Primary Election on March 5, 2024.

The extreme housing shortage coupled with the exorbitant cost of living throughout the State of California has led to our prevailing crisis of homelessness and housing insecurity. California State Proposition 1 will transform our state's mental health system and help to house those suffering with mental and behavioral health issues. This landmark proposition will reallocate billions of dollars to Californians with the most severe mental health needs and addiction issues, including those living in encampments.

In fact, this investment would be the single largest expansion of California's behavioral health treatment and residential settings in our state's history – creating new, dedicated housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness who have behavioral health needs. Through a \$6.38 billion bond, tens of thousands of Californians annually will receive mental health and addiction services, more than 11,000 housing settings will be created for residents with the most severe needs, and \$1 billion will be allocated to veterans experiencing homelessness.

The state funding granted by Proposition 1 will directly support Berkeley's work to solve our homeless and behavioral health crisis. Berkeley has dedicated unprecedented City resources to combating homelessness and providing mental health services. However, Berkeley must ensure our State likewise provides treatment and long-term housing for people with acute mental illness and substance use disorder if we are to reduce homelessness. Therefore, we are requesting that the City Council support California Proposition 1 appearing on the March 5, 2024 California primary election ballot to continue working toward a sustainable solution to the mental health and homelessness crises across the State of California, and request that the City Manager issue a press release indicating the City Council's support for Proposition 1: Treatment not Tents.

This historic mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment system transformation comes after months of engagement with stakeholders across the state: people and families with lived experience, health care professionals, children and youth groups, veteran's organizations, schools and school administrators, businesses, labor leaders, mental health and equity advocates, first responders, and local officials.

[Senate Bill 326](#) modernizes the Mental Health Services Act to address today's behavioral health system and demand for services. These reforms expand services to include treatment for those with substance use disorders, prioritize care for those with the most serious mental illness, provide ongoing resources for housing and workforce, and continue investments in prevention, early intervention, and innovative pilot programs. This bill reforms our system of care to prioritize what Californians need today with new and increased accountability for real results for all families and communities.

[Assembly Bill 531](#) includes a \$6.38 billion general obligation bond to build 11,150 new treatment beds and supportive housing units as well as outpatient capacity to help serve tens of thousands of people annually – from intensive services for homeless people with severe mental illness, to counseling for kids suffering from depression, and everyone in between. This investment would be the single largest expansion of California's behavioral health treatment and residential settings in our state's history – creating new, dedicated housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness who have behavioral health needs, with a dedicated investment to serve veterans. These settings will provide Californians experiencing behavioral health conditions a place to stay while safely stabilizing, healing, and receiving ongoing support. Included in the bond is a \$1 billion set aside specifically for veterans' housing.

87 percent of Californians say there is a mental health crisis in the United States.

- One in 20 adults in California is living with a serious mental illness.
- One in 13 children in California has a serious emotional disturbance and 30 percent of youth 12 to 24 years of age experience serious psychological distress.
- One in 10 Californians meet the criteria for a substance use disorder.

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On February 23rd, 2022, 500 volunteers counted nearly 10,000 unhoused residents living in Alameda County. 1,057 reside in the City of Berkeley and of those, 43% reported suffering from mental health issues.

Research shows that incarcerating the mentally ill is counterproductive to rehabilitation and long-term public safety due to recidivism. It costs \$100,000 per person to incarcerate an estimated 150,000 people who are mentally ill; treatment provides far better outcomes at far less cost.

It is in the best interest of the City of Berkeley, and all of its residents, to support California's State Proposition 1.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The environment is not directly impacted by this item.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Wengraf

Council District 6

510-981-7160

Attachments:

1: Resolution

2: [Yes on 1 – Treatment Not Tents Fact Sheet](#)

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

BERKELEY SUPPORTS PROPOSITION 1

WHEREAS, the very high cost of living coupled with an extreme shortage of affordable housing has produced a crisis in the State of California; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 1 will transform the State's approach to addressing homelessness and the prevalence of mental health illness; and

WHEREAS, 87% of Californians say there is a mental health crisis in the United States; and

WHEREAS, one in 20 adults in California is living with a serious mental illness. One in 13 children in California has a serious emotional disturbance and 30 percent of youth 12 to 24 years of age experience serious psychological distress; and

WHEREAS, one in 10 Californians meet the criteria for a substance use disorder; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 Point-In-Time Count found that 43% of Berkeley's unhoused residents suffer from mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, research shows that incarcerating the mentally ill is counterproductive to rehabilitation and long-term public safety due to recidivism; and

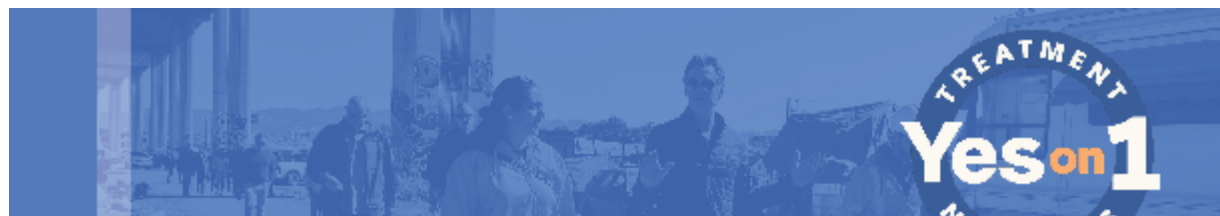
WHEREAS, Senate Bill 326 modernizes the Mental Health Services Act into the Behavioral Health Services Act, to address today's behavioral health system. Services would expand to include treatment for those with substance use disorders and prioritized care for those with the most serious mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 531 includes a \$6.38 billion general obligation bond to build 11,150 new treatment beds and supportive housing units as well as outpatient capacity to help serve tens of thousands of people annually – from intensive services for homeless people with severe mental illness, to counseling for kids suffering from depression, and everyone in between; and

WHEREAS, Californians will have the ability to transform the state's mental health system by voting yes on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 on Proposition 1.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City of Berkeley applauds and wholeheartedly supports Proposition 1.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Berkeley City Council encourages all Berkeley voters to support Proposition One (1) on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 with a YES vote.



### Overview

For the first time in decades, Californians will have the ability to transform the state's mental health system – modernizing to meet the needs of all Californians.

**Proposition 1: Treatment not Tents** will refocus billions of dollars in existing funds to prioritize Californians – including our veterans – with the deepest mental health needs, living in encampments, or suffering the worst substance use issues.

*“We see the signs of our broken mental health system every day – too many Californians suffering from mental health needs or substance use disorders are unable to get the support or care they need,” said Governor Newsom.  
“This will prioritize getting people off the streets, out of tents, and into treatment.”*

### Why Proposition 1?

So much of the challenge we see on the streets is untreated substance abuse; two out of three homeless people right now have active symptoms of mental health illness. Proposition 1 would allow people with serious addiction to directly access services – something currently prohibited under existing law.

*Prop 1 will get struggling Californians – including our veterans – the mental health treatment they need, fund substance abuse treatment, and help get those suffering from mental health crises off the streets and into care.*

Research shows that incarcerating the mentally ill is counterproductive to rehabilitation, and in fact makes conditions worse. That undermines long-term public safety by increasing recidivism. This measure would create mental health facilities with a very simple premise: **Treatment not Jail**. Many people with mental illness and substance use problems need treatment not punishment.

### The Details



#### EXPANDS COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES:

Prop 1 will expand community-based mental health and addiction services across the state and serve **tens of thousands of Californians** each year.



#### BUILDS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

The Initiative will create supportive housing settings where over **11,000 Californians** with the severest mental health needs can live, recover, stabilize and thrive.



#### PROVIDES TREATMENT OVER INCARCERATION:

Today, we spend **over \$100,000 per person** to incarcerate 150,000 people who are mentally ill. Research shows it's costly and counterproductive. Prop 1 will prioritize treatment not punishment for the mentally ill.



#### HELPS HOMELESS VETERANS:

It is disgraceful that over 10,000 California veterans, many suffering from PTSD, are homeless and on the streets. Prop 1 will provide **\$1 billion** to serve veterans experiencing homelessness, mental health and substance abuse issues.



#### ADDRESSES SHORTAGE OF MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS:

Currently, those with serious mental health issues can wait six months or longer just for an introductory appointment. Prop 1 will help fund additional professionals so that people with mental health needs can **get help in real time**.



#### REQUIRES STRICT ACCOUNTABILITY:

Democrats and Republicans support Prop 1 because it addresses mental health and homelessness without raising taxes. And Prop 1 has **strict accountability measures**, including mandatory audits, to ensure that funds are spent as promised.

Vote **YES** on Prop 1 on March 5, 2024

