

City of Palo Alto

Office of the Mayor and City Council

May 14, 2021

The Honorable Josh Becker
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3076
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 591 (Becker) Senior citizens: intergenerational housing developments
Support from the City of Palo Alto**

Dear Senator Becker:

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I want to express support for Senate Bill 591 (SB 591) which will provide affordable housing builders an opportunity to construct more affordable units for seniors and transition age youth.


As it relates to financing affordable housing, the options to pay for and build these projects are limited. Previously, tax credits were used to help finance senior affordable housing for people age 55 and older, though it came with a restriction that prohibited the financing of other types of affordable units in the same building. An affordable housing project aimed at serving seniors could not include some units for transition-aged youth (TAY), despite the well documented studies showing the social and health benefits to seniors associated with interactions with TAY. Without a change in legislation, seniors are missing opportunities to access social and health benefits and services.

Our support for this legislation is oriented toward adjusting known ambient financing restrictions in a manner that could lead to housing developments that do more than just put a roof over people's head. Youth in foster care often have lived through traumatic experiences, before and after placement into a foster home. Once they "age" out of the system, many do not have the skills or support needed to meet the challenges of life and some enter homelessness. In the 2019 Homeless Point in Time Count for Santa Clara County, 19% of the homeless individuals surveyed indicated that they had been in the foster system.

Senate Bill 591 will allow seniors and youth to live in the same affordable housing complex, provide affordable housing developers greater access to financing, and help reduce our homeless population by providing housing opportunities for transition age youth and support for seniors.

Thank you for your leadership, especially on SB 591. We are glad to see such swift approval of the bill. We greatly appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Tom DuBois, Mayor
City of Palo Alto

cc:

Marc Berman, Assemblymember, California's 24th Assembly District
Palo Alto City Council

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