

Senate Bill 492

YOUTH HOUSING BOND FUND ACT OF 2025

Senator Caroline Menjivar (D – San Fernando Valley)

SUMMARY

SB 492 will combat homelessness and housing instability for California's most vulnerable youth, including youth in foster care. By prioritizing building housing and supporting capital expenditures for necessary equipment for youth housing, SB 492 will create a youth housing bond to increase the availability and accessibility of funding for youth housing and youth centers to help stem the pipeline of youth homelessness to chronic adult homelessness.

PROBLEM

Current law directs the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to establish goals to prevent youth homelessness and improve low-barrier, diverse housing opportunities. Recent statewide investments to sustain and expand housing for persons experiencing homelessness have focused most resources on addressing adult homelessness. Annual homelessness counts consistently find that California has the highest number of homeless youth, with over 60% of the homeless youth being unsheltered, and only 3.4% of the beds available in California are dedicated to youth.

Recent reports indicate that in San Francisco County, 49% of adults experiencing homelessness first experienced homelessness under the age of 25, and in Los Angeles County 45% of adults experiencing homelessness first experienced homelessness under the age of 25.ⁱ

BACKGROUND

Homelessness among some groups of youth is significantly disproportionate – up to 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+. Among racial and ethnic groups, African American youth were especially overrepresented, with an 83% increased risk of having experienced homelessness over youth of other races.ⁱⁱⁱ Further, some data has shown that 50% of the chronically homeless population had their first experience of homelessness when

they were under the age of 25.^{iv} In 2024, California counted 9,052 youth experiencing homelessness on their own, and another 1,890 who were parenting their own children.^v New data from the California Department of Education, which captures youth doubled-up or couch surfing, found 8,831 unaccompanied minors experienced homelessness during the 2023-24 school year.^{vi}

The purpose of extended foster care, which supports the transition to adulthood for youth in foster care aged 18- 21, is to prevent homelessness as they enter early adulthood. However, without sufficient transitional housing, the vision of extended foster care is falling flat. Failure to support our transition aged youth experiencing homelessness results in increased chronic homelessness, disconnection as adults, negative long term health impacts including increased risk of mental health and addiction issues.

California voters have approved two statewide bonds to create housing for youth through the Youth Center and Youth Shelter Bond Act of 1988 and Proposition 1C of 2006. However, the last statewide housing bond in 2018 included no targeted resources for youth.

Solution

SB 492 will help address the ongoing need to develop housing to support current and former foster youth along with youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness. SB 492 will increase housing stability and enhance the impact of California's investments in housing for youth by:

- ✓ Creating a dedicated funding source, the 2025 Youth Housing Bond Fund, to combat youth homelessness.
- ✓ Allowing both public agencies and community-based organizations with specific youth expertise to apply for the youth bond funds for housing and youth center projects.

Status

Introduced February 19, 2025

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ⁱ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Housing and Development. (2023). The 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress by de Sousa, Tanya et al.

ⁱⁱ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

ⁱⁱⁱ Johnson, R. (2013). Working together to end youth homelessness. Los Angeles Services Authority Greater LA Homeless County. Retrieved:

<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/cms/docs/WorkingTogetherHomeless.pdf> ^{iv} U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Housing and Development. (2023). The 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress by de Sousa, Tanya et al.

SUPPORT

Alliance for Children’s Rights (co-sponsor)
California Coalition for Youth (co-sponsor)
Children Now (co-sponsor)

CONTACT

Diego Nelson
Office of Senator Caroline Menjivar
(916) 651-4020



ⁱ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Housing and Development. (2023). The 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress by de Sousa, Tanya et al.

ⁱⁱ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

ⁱⁱⁱ Johnson, R. (2013). Working together to end youth homelessness. Los Angeles Services Authority Greater LA Homeless County. Retrieved: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/cms/docs/WorkingTogetherHomeless.pdf> ^{iv} U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Housing and Development. (2023). The 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress by de Sousa, Tanya et al.