

DLANC Downtown
Los Angeles
Neighborhood
Council

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DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Office of Los Angeles Mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa
Office of CD 14, Councilman Jose Huizar
City council offices & City Attorney
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: Support for LA City Council File Number 13-0002-S29.

Dear Councilman Huizar,

This correspondence is to convey support by the Board of Directors of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) for approval of LA City Council File Number 13-0002-S29 which opposes AB5. At the May 14th board meeting, the motion was passed on the recommendation of DLANC’s Public Safety & Health committee meeting from May 1st.

There is no neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles that is more impacted by homelessness than Downtown Los Angeles. DLANC has supported every affordable housing project from new construction to rehab of existing facilities. However, maintaining and indeed protecting the worst elements of the present situation without a strategy to add housing and services will not solve homelessness but will devastate the communities in which it is imposed. This strategy must include decentralizing services and housing throughout Los Angeles County in order to integrate homeless back with their families and communities.

Many legal settlements have been imposed to protect stakeholders who are homeless. However, responsible behavior is also required for the safety of the homeless themselves, neighboring business and residents and those with a moral interest in the well being of others. The legislation in AB5 encourages unhealthy and undesirable behavior, effectively sanctions the culture of homelessness and ignores issues such as affordable housing, substance abuse treatment, and mental health care.

On public property, these legal protections could compromise public health and public safety by encouraging unhealthy and undesirable behaviors and limit the capacity of local governments to regulate these behaviors. As the Resolution articulates, AB 5 would encourage antisocial behavior and fails to address more critical issues related to homelessness including the need for safe, decent, permanent and affordable housing, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services.

AB 5 would make it illegal to force homeless persons into shelters and would mandate 24-hour access to public bathrooms, which would compromise the authority of local governments to close public parks, bringing rise to public safety concerns during late night hours. AB 5 effectively cedes control of public spaces and compromises the rights of residents and business owners to clean streets and safe, habitable neighborhoods.

If passed, AB 5 would permit the following activities on public property:

- Sleeping in public spaces such as sidewalks and parks
- 24/7 access to bathrooms, showers, water and clean syringes without restrictions
- Car camping on city streets without restrictions
- Urinating and collecting recycling trash
- Possessing goods for recycling including goods containing alcohol residue.
- Panhandling
- Right to refuse the offer of a homeless shelter

DLANC will continue to advocate for safe, sane and effective services for creating housing. That strategy must solve homelessness and create opportunities for those who seek to rebuild their lives. However AB5 is not that solution.

Sincerely,
Patricia Berman
DLANC President
Chair

Sincerely,
J. Russell Brown
DLANC Public Safety & Health committee
Vice President Administration

CC: office of Mayor
CC: Other city council offices