

California SMI Coalition-CaSMI-Co

Rosemarie King, 187-41st Street, Sacramento CA 95819

May 4, 2016

Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Office of the Governor
California State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Oppose “No Place Like Home” Bond Debt

Dear Governor Brown:

We ask that you consider our thoughtful opposition to a budget plan that would divert vital funds from treatment of serious mental illnesses. A Senate bond plan would indebt the state for 30 years, while depriving more Californians of any hope for independence. The human logjam for California’s most severely psychiatrically disabled population is at critical mass. This is the target population that voters were promised would receive treatment and supportive housing back in 2004, with passage of Prop 63, the Mental Health Services Act/MHSA. However in 2016, this population is still housed in prisons, jails, state hospitals, their families’ back bedrooms, roach motels and graveyards in addition to a percentage that are homeless.

There is no doubt that there must be a radical redesign of the current systems in order to stop wasting money and lives. However, the California Senate’s “*housing first*” plan is not the bold action needed and it is not legal or affordable. A Steinberg/DeLeon proposal, “No Place Like Home,” would authorize \$2 Billion in state bonds and indebt the Prop 63 fund. The purpose of the Prop 63 debt is to construct housing for all homeless Californians. However, Steinberg and Senate supporters ignore a former **Attorney General Opinion* that explains why Prop 63 funds may not be used to fund housing construction.**

This AG opinion clearly cites the provisions that dedicate funding for CA WIC 5600.3 Systems of Care treatment for children, adults, and older adults. Advisors tell us that housing bonds would risk legal challenges based on this opinion. The 2016 proposal by Senate President Pro-Tem Kevin DeLeon goes beyond the earlier violations identified by the AG opinion by proposing to take money from the mental health system to fund housing development with no guarantee that it will target the Prop 63 population entitled to treatment services. And, the proposal creates debt that is not clearly defined or publicly vetted.

Based on the information released, the MHSA fund could end up **paying back \$3.9 Billion for a ‘housing first’ plan**, an idea to reduce homelessness already tried and failed. California mental health systems have no money to spare for this unlawful plan. The state must first develop and fund a system of care that provides “*medically necessary treatment*” for serious mental illnesses under the same terms as that for physical illnesses and other disabilities.

This housing plan to combat homelessness is set to come before the Senate in a June Budget Bill and must be opposed. ‘No Place like Home’ is a slogan, not a plan, seemingly predicated on the belief that “if you build it they will come.” But housing first, and treatment later, is bound to fail. Those suffering the delusions, paranoia, and cognitive disorganization of severe mental illness may not be able to utilize housing until and unless they receive treatment. Intensive support services and treatment for chronic and severe mental illness must go hand-in-hand with housing.

The only bold action required by the governor and the legislature is to keep the original promise to the Prop 63 voters and follow the law to fully fund a system of care for the WIC 5600.3 population. The legislature, governor and Mr. Steinberg are in a position to help rein in Prop 63 spending and instead invest in developing an accountability system. This is the only Prop 63 repurposing identified by the Governor's Department of Finance, the CA State Auditor, and Little Hoover Commission reports.

The undersigned have combined our regional efforts across numerous counties to unify our voices and establish a California SMI Coalition (CASMI-Co). This coalition is dedicated to ending the delivery system gaps for California's population with serious mental illnesses. **After 11 years and over 16 Billion dollars** in MHSA Revenue we find that the **CA mental health system is more impacted, more fragmented and more divided.**

We call for clear reforms of Prop 63 expenditures to keep the promise to voters to guarantee an entitlement to treatment first.

Respectfully,
CaSMI Coalition (CaSMI-CO)
Signature page attached

Cc:
Senate President Pro Tem De Leon
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Senate Minority Leader Jean Fuller
Assembly Minority Leader Chad Hayes
Senator Emeritus Darrell Steinberg
Senator Loni Hancock (D-Oakland)
Senator Holly Mitchell (D- Los Angeles)
Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco)
Senator Jim Beall (D-San Jose)
Senator Bob Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys)
Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-Sacramento)

Department of Finance Director Michael Cohen
Department of Finance Chief Counsel K. Krogseng
Office of State Audits and Evaluations, Assistant Chief, Cheryl McCormick
Health and Human Services Program Budget Manager, M. Paulin
Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Diana S. Dooley

*AG Opinion:
[file:///Users/tcpasquini/Downloads/AttorneyGeneralOpinion_SecuritizationOfProposition63Funds%20copy.pdf%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/tcpasquini/Downloads/AttorneyGeneralOpinion_SecuritizationOfProposition63Funds%20copy.pdf%20(1).pdf)

*AG Opinion: Enter in Browser
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2690798-AttorneyGeneralOpinion.html#document/p15/a271777>

CONTACT:
Rosemarie King, 187-41st Street, Sacramento CA 95819
916-456-8103 CELL: 916-768-8012 email: rking1@surewest.net
right2treatment@gmail.com

CaSMI Coalition-signers who oppose “No Place Like Home”

Teresa Pasquini, Contra Costa County, Co-Founder, Mental Illness FACTS and Right 2 Treatment

Rose King, Sacramento County, Co-Founder, Mental Illness FACTS and Right 2 Treatment

Lauren Rettagliata, Contra Costa County, Right 2 Treatment

Patricia Fontana-Narell, Alameda County, Co-Founder, Voices of Mothers

Candy DeWitt, Alameda County, Co-Founder, Voices of Mothers

Yvonne, Rutherford, MD

Dave Kahler, Contra Costa

Gloria Hill, former Contra Costa Mental Health Adult Family Coordinator

Dale Milfay, San Francisco

Karen and Michael Cohen, Contra Costa

Jennifer Hoff, Orange County

Kathy Day, Sacramento County

Colleen King, LMFT, Sacramento Psychotherapist, Consumer, Family Member, Right 2 Treatment

Anthony and Cynthia Hernandez, San Bernardino County

Denise Lai, mental health advocate

Joanne Sultar, Family Advocate

Katie Cooper

Monica Otis, Advocate for SMI

Ednah Beth Friedman, Alameda County, (former) Conservatorship/Guardianship Program Manager for Contra Costa County

Rick Needoba, Contra Costa County

Brenda Crawford, Solano County

Rosemary Milbrath, Sonoma County, Right 2 Treatment

Mary Ann Bernard, Sacramento County

Kate Espinoza, Sacramento County

Steven P. Segal, Mack Distinguished Professor and Director Mental Health and Social Welfare Research Group and The Mac Center on Mental Health and Social Conflict, School of Social Welfare, UC

Mary Widdifield- Marin County, author of *Behind the Wall: The True Story of Mental Illness as Told by Parents*

Elfrieda Shukert and Jay Shukert, San Francisco

Dede Ranahan

Gloria and Will Davidson

Linda Maio, Vice-Mayor, Berkeley, Alameda County

Deborah Fabos

Gabriella Raymond, Alameda County

Susan Morgan, San Mateo County

Bill and Shirley Winthrop

Carolyn F. Hokanson,

Jerry T. Hokanson,

Jackie Moreau

Joy Torres, Right2Treatment

Kirsti Nicholas

Connie Steers, retired Patients' Rights Residential Advocate, Contra Costa County, family member/consumer, 5th CSW-CCMH, Right to Treatment member

Caroline Kreitzberg

Chuck and Sharon Dellamarie, Family Members, Burbank, Los Angeles County

Patricia Pereyra, Contra Costa County

Susan M Woo

Shannon Jonson, Kern County, Right to Treatment.

James McKay, Kern County

Barbara DellaMarie, Sacramento County, Consumer, Family Member

Kathleen Sikora

Kori Williams, Kern County

My name is Teresa Pasquini a lifetime resident of West Contra Costa County and a former Contra Costa MH Commissioner for John Gioia who served for 9 years. I have personally housed homeless youth and families of color and fought for their right to treatment all along the MH continuum. I am grateful to the MHC for inserting your state mandated authority to weigh in on this critical discussion around the NPLH concept. I am also grateful to the Board for hearing those concerns and encouraging this special meeting.

I have been very involved in studying and opposing this concept since it was introduced last January. While I agree that we must find creative ways to end homelessness for all, we must NOT attempt to do so on the backs of families, youth and adults of all races, genders, sexual orientations who are disabled by serious mental illness.

The proposed trailer bill does NOT target those who the voters targeted when passing Prop 63. This housing concept usurps the county's local control to determine how MHSA funds are spent and should NOT be supported by the MH Commission or the CC BOS. Most importantly it usurps the fundamental values of the MHSA which calls for consumers and families to drive system change, not developers, the Legislature or the Governor.

I want to submit the email that I wrote to the Board yesterday requesting that they oppose C.27. I also include a letter to the Governor signed by Coalition of CA Stakeholders, many who reside in Contra Costa, who oppose the NPLH concept. We all fully support the need to maintain local control of MHSA funds to develop local strategies for a treatment continuum of care that will augment a housing continuum of care and prevent homelessness, hospitalization, incarceration and suffering.

We highlight that there are well-founded potential legal challenges that should prevent the Board of Supervisors from supporting this plan "in concept." There are proven failures of "housing first" plans, and the highly critical analyses of Prop 63 spending and questionable programs. Investigations find that the state and counties can produce little evidence of benefits from the \$17 Billion generated since the law was enacted in 2004. The first report identified extensive problems in 2008, including the failure to even develop an implementation plan. Since then the California State Auditor condemned the lack of accountability in 2013, and the Governor's own Little Hoover Commission found no evidence of progress in 2015.

I respectfully ask, where is the evidence that Contra Costa has established an adequate system of care for anyone along the MH Continuum? We have no Level 14 Homes in county. We have inadequate and poorly monitored board and care homes. We have inadequate emergency, inpatient and transitional housing services for our children and adult WIC 5600.3 populations. Like all counties, our largest MH provider is the county jail. Our State Hospital census is rising. Our access to both primary and BH care is grossly limited. We have critical local needs beyond

homelessness that this commission has thoughtfully highlighted in your recent White Paper to the BOS.

So, my questions for the Commission and the BOS, do you believe that we have extra money in our MH Trust Fund to share with the state and other counties? If not, then how can our local leaders agree to hand back money that we need in Contra Costa to provide medically necessary treatment services that the Legislature and the Governor realigned to us?

The No Place Like Home concept is in fact an unfunded state mandate that is in conflict with our local policies and state law. It must be opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Pasquini

Co-Founder Mental Illness FACTS, Right 2 Treatment and CaSMI Coalition