
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 634
Author: Pérez (D), et al.
Amended: 6/24/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE: 4-2, 4/23/25

AYES: Durazo, Arreguín, Cabaldon, Laird

NOES: Choi, Seyarto

NO VOTE RECORDED: Wiener

SENATE FLOOR: 23-11, 6/3/25

AYES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla,

Pérez, Richardson, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NOES: Alvarado-Gil, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Jones, Niello, Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares

NO VOTE RECORDED: Becker, Grayson, Ochoa Bogh, Reyes, Rubio, Umberg

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 44-15, 9/9/25 – Roll call not available

SUBJECT: Local government: homelessness

SOURCE: Disability Rights California
Inner City Law Center
National Alliance to End Homelessness
Western Center on Law & Poverty

DIGEST: This bill prohibits a local jurisdiction from adopting a local ordinance, or enforcing an existing ordinance, that prohibits a person or organization from providing support services to a person who is homeless or assisting with acts related to basic survival.

Assembly Amendments make clarifying changes to the definition of an act related to basic survival and defines support services.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Allows cities and counties to “make and enforce within its limits, all local, police, sanitary and other ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws.”
- 2) Allows local agencies to impose fines and penalties for violations of local ordinances. A violation of a local ordinance is a misdemeanor, unless by ordinance it is made an infraction.
- 3) Allows a local agency to make any violation of any of its ordinances subject to an administrative fine or penalty. Administrative fines and penalties are subject to the same maximum fine limits. The local agency must adopt an ordinance specifying the administrative procedures that govern the imposition, enforcement, collection, and administrative review of the fines or penalties.

This bill:

- 1) Prohibits a local jurisdiction from adopting a local ordinance, or enforcing an existing ordinance, that prohibits a person or organization from providing support services, including legal services or medical care, to a person who is homeless, or assisting a homeless person with an act related to basic survival.
- 2) Defines acts related to basic survival to include, but not be limited to, assisting with or providing items to assist with any of the following:
 - a) Eating and drinking, including provision of food and water.
 - b) Sleeping, including provision of blankets and pillows.
 - c) Protecting oneself from the elements.
 - d) Other activities and items necessary for immediate personal health and hygiene.
- 3) Provides that nothing in the above definition shall be interpreted to include distribution of plywood or other heavy construction materials.
- 4) Defines support services to include nonhousing services described in existing law.

- 5) Makes findings that ensuring a compassionate, evidence-based approach to ending homelessness is a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair, and that this measure applies to all local agencies, including charter cities.
- 6) Declares that the Legislature's intent is not to impose any other restrictions on local jurisdictions beyond those set forth in this act.

Background

California's homelessness crisis. In its December 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimated 187,084 Californians are experiencing homelessness, and California accounts for 24% of all people experiencing homelessness in the United States.

In 2018, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in the *Martin v. City of Boise* case that cities could not prohibit individuals experiencing homelessness from camping in public places (e.g. sidewalks, public parks) unless the city had adequate shelter available. Until 2024, this meant California cities could no longer arrest, charge fines, or punish people for camping out in public if adequate shelter space is unavailable. In 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the ruling in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*. The Supreme Court's 6-3 decision held that local ordinances with civil and criminal penalties for camping on public land do not constitute cruel and unusual punishment of individuals experiencing homelessness. This ruling lifted restrictions on local ordinances regulating homelessness.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/9/25)

Disability Rights California (Co-Sponsor)

Inner City Law Center (Co-Sponsor)

National Alliance to End Homelessness (Co-Sponsor)

Public Advocates (Co-Sponsor)

Western Center on Law & Poverty (Co-Sponsor)

Abode Housing Development

ACLU California Action

All Home

Alliance San Diego

Brilliant Corners

California Association of Food Banks

California Democratic Party
California Interfaith Power & Light
California Professional Firefighters
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations
Coalition on Homelessness
Compass Family Services
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Courage California
Drug Policy Alliance
End Child Poverty California Powered by Grace
End Poverty in California
Enterprise Community Partners, INC.
Equal Rights Advocates
Harm Reduction Therapy Center
Healthright 360
Homefirst Services of Santa Clara County
Human Impact Partners
Hunger Action Los Angeles
Inland Region Reentry Collaborative
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
National Harm Reduction Coalition
National Homelessness Law Center
Noho Home Alliance
Oakland Privacy
Parent Voices
Path (people Assisting the Homeless)
Peace and Freedom Party of California
Public Law Center
Sacramento Area Congregations Together
Safe Place for Youth
Seiu California
Seiu California
Solano County Democratic Central Committee
Swords to Plowshares - Vets Helping Vets
Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation
The Gubbio Project
University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law Homeless Advocacy Clinic
Valley Oasis

Westside Community Coalition
Youth Law Center

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/9/25)

City of Corona
City of Riverside
City of Stanton
County of Orange
County of San Bernardino

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author, “Addressing the unhoused crisis in California effectively requires proven response efforts focused on housing, basic services, and financial support for unhoused individuals. Despite state investments in these and other support service programs that link unhoused Californians to critical services, there have been troubling local efforts intended to impose barriers and restrictions on the ability for service providers to assist unhoused people with basic survival. This includes imposing excessive fines and even threatening jail time by categorizing service providers as aiding and abetting for example. Such punitive policies deepen poverty for unhoused individuals by limiting their access to these vital and proven services, pushing them further into poverty rather than helping them escape it. One study showed that fines prolonged people’s homelessness by nearly two years. SB 634 reaffirms California’s commitment to addressing the unhoused crisis through a common sense and humanitarian based approach by eliminating the adoption of local ordinances which create financial and legal barriers to unhoused service providers that are providing basic survival goods and services related to housing, healthcare, and legal services, among others.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: Some local governments oppose SB 634. For example, the County of Orange writes in opposition: “While the intent of SB 634 is to address the homeless crisis, this bill may restrict the County's ability to properly respond to residents’ and businesses’ quality of life concerns as we address homelessness in a thoughtful manner.”

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