

August 25, 2021

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, California State Assembly, Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 17 – Office of Racial Equity
Letter of Support from All Home CA

Dear Chair Gonzalez,

I am writing to urge your support for **SB 17** (Pan), a bill that establishes the Office of Racial Equity and the Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council. These new bodies would be tasked with developing a statewide racial equity framework and concrete strategies for addressing racial inequity across state governments. Establishing an Office of Racial Equity is a critical first step in turning a commitment to equity into actionable steps toward achieving it. Furthermore, SB 17 also creates a new position, a Chief Equity Officer appointed by the Governor, which reports to the Secretary of Government Operations, to collaborate with the Office of Racial Equity on the statewide framework and also create a state plan to address racial disparities in state hiring and procurement.

MidPen Housing is one of the nation's leading nonprofit developers, owners and managers of high-quality affordable housing and onsite resident services. Since MidPen was founded in 1970, we have developed over 100 communities and 8,000 homes for low-income families, seniors, including homeless families and individuals and those with supportive housing needs throughout Northern California.

California's housing crisis disproportionately affects communities of color. Despite legal and regulatory mechanisms that have made outright housing discrimination illegal in California, there remain large disparities along racial and ethnic lines that prevent Californians of color from acquiring, keeping, and affording housing. These disparities are especially acute for Black, Latinx, Native American/Alaska Native, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Californians.

Passing SB 17, establishing a statewide Office of Racial Equity and appointing a Chief Equity Officer, is a crucial first step. A fully resourced and appropriately authorized office is a powerful tool not only to redress structural racism in our housing and healthcare systems but also to generate new pathways to close the opportunity gap for BIPOC communities throughout the state. For this reason, I respectfully request your support of SB 17.

Sincerely,



Matthew O. Franklin
President & CEO, MidPen Housing Corporation

Cc:
Nevada V. Merriman, Director of Policy, MidPen Housing