

Poll Reveals Strong Support for Large Affordable Housing Bond

Treasurer Chiang & affordable housing advocates release results, call on Governor Brown and Legislative leaders to 'Think Big' as they work on housing package

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SACRAMENTO, CA -- Amid Californians' mounting concern over rising homelessness and out-of-reach rents, California State Treasurer John Chiang and a coalition of affordable housing advocates have released the results of a new poll, which shows strong voter support for a \$6-9 billion statewide affordable housing bond in 2018. Today in California, more than 1 in 3 families can't afford their rent and 1.5 households pay more than half their income toward housing.

The poll, conducted by JMM Research for Advocates for Affordable Housing, found that the electorate is attuned to the state's housing problems, with 60% of likely November 2018 voters supporting a \$6 billion to \$9 billion statewide affordable housing bond.

Earlier this month, Governor Brown and legislative leaders committed to begin tackling the growing housing gap with a housing package that would include a permanent source of state investment in affordable homes; a bond measure to provide a significant, short-term jumpstart to get affordable homebuilding underway; and reforms to speed approval and construction of affordable developments. Housing leaders said the poll shows voters are ready and willing to pass a housing bond two to three times the amount currently under consideration by the legislature.

"I am encouraged by the recent commitment made by Governor Brown and legislative leaders to tackle a housing shortage so catastrophic in scale that it not only threatens our economic vitality, but fuels inequality, poverty, domestic violence, hardship for our veterans, and growing resignation that the California dream is now out of reach," said Treasurer Chiang. "When one-fifth of the nation's homeless reside in our state and most working Californians can no longer even hope to live in the communities in which they work or were once raised, we must think big and act boldly in correctly sizing our public investment."

Chiang added that, "When 40% of surveyed Californians have someone in their immediate circle of friends and family living on the streets and 60% who have seen high housing costs drive their children and close friends to move away, there is no room for timidity. In light of our polling results, the \$3 billion contained in the current legislation is simply not enough. Voters demand more."

Robbie Hunter, President of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California said, "We represent hundreds of thousands of blue collar families that are struggling to keep or buy a home. Our catastrophic housing problem is too big to be wallpapered over. A new \$6 billion bond would shelter more than one million Californians in need and create 120,000 family sustaining construction jobs. A \$9 billion bond would shelter 1.7 million Californians and create 180,000 construction jobs. Let's get this done."

"Modest-income earners in California are spending more than half of their income on rent," said Lisa Hershey, executive director of Housing California, an advocacy nonprofit. "The

lack of affordable homes pushes hardest on them, making it the single biggest driver of poverty and income inequality, and placing more families at the brink of homelessness."

Ray Pearl, the California Housing Consortium's Executive Director said, "Lawmakers are returning home to communities where families are demanding relief from unprecedented housing pressures. Bold action from our legislators and Governor Brown is needed to relieve the heavy toll massive state disinvestment has taken on families, children, and our economy. With significant, renewed investment, we can open the door to affordable homes to more Californians, enhance our economic competitiveness and lift families out of poverty."

Pat Sabelhaus, board member of California Council for Affordable Housing said, "The Governor and the Legislature are on a roll in achieving bi-partisan two-thirds votes to address the toughest issues of the day. We urge our state leaders to continue their bold leadership by making 2017 the year that the legislature takes giant steps towards addressing the state's housing crisis."

The recently completed poll was commissioned as part of the groundwork laid by State Treasurer John Chiang and a coalition of affordable housing advocates to place a large affordable housing bond initiative on the November 2018 ballot should state policymakers fail to act. Poll memo available upon request.

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