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April 14, 2021

Honorable Autumn Burke  
Chair, Revenue and Taxation Committee  
California State Assembly  
1020 N Street, Room 167A  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 71 (RIVAS) as amended March 25, 2021 - SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Burke:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 71** which commits the legislature to a comprehensive plan to address homelessness by investing, for the first time in history, dedicated ongoing state investment in long-term solutions to homelessness. This bill is scheduled for hearing before Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee on April 19, 2021.

California leads the nation in total number of people experiencing homelessness, with one in four Americans experiencing homelessness residing in California. In January 2019, an estimated 151,278 people experienced homelessness in California at a single point in time, a 17% increase since 2018. African American, indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities show alarmingly higher rates of homelessness throughout the state. For example, African Americans, who represent only about 6.5% of Californians, account for nearly 40% of the state's homeless population. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened our homelessness crisis by putting hundreds of thousands of Californians into financial distress, and either on the brink of or experiencing homelessness. It has also endangered the health and wellbeing of those experiencing homelessness, and depleted local resources. Therefore, the need to address the

homelessness crisis with urgency and innovative solutions at this moment is critical.

AB 71 (L. Rivas) establishes a permanent source of funding and a collaborative statewide strategy for solving homelessness. It will fill gaps within the state's response and will scale evidence-based solutions, while promoting innovations to move people quickly into permanent housing. AB 71 also aims to eliminate racial bias, ensure youth and survivors of domestic violence have equitable access to housing and services, and enhance coordination and collaboration among state and local agencies. The bill ensures a transparent and accountable process through performance measures, rewards local governments for hitting aggressive goals, and removes funding for any jurisdiction failing to spend resources quickly. It requires annual reporting, and strengthens data collection at the local and state levels. In transforming the state's response to homelessness, it will also create a more transparent program than the state has ever before crafted. AB 71 relies on funding for large and multinational corporations for the revenue source, rebalancing inequities laid bare by COVID.

We are committed to ensuring homelessness becomes brief, rare and nonrecurrent. Ongoing state investments, combined with significant structural changes to how California oversees, coordinates, and delivers results are essential to solving homelessness. For these reasons, DRC supports this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gregory Cramer".

Gregory Cramer  
Senior Legislative Advocate  
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee  
Honorable Luz Rivas, California State Assembly  
Matthew Montgomery, Chief of Staff, Office of Luz Rivas