



September 2, 2021

**VIA Email to the Office of the Governor and Author**

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 9 (Atkins) – Housing development: approvals – REQUEST FOR GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

**The League of Women Voters of California writes to request your signature on SB 9 (Atkins)**, which would ease some of the barriers to building smaller homes by streamlining approval of single-family lot splits as well as allowing two units on these newly created lots. This bill promotes small-scale neighborhood development by allowing up to four units of housing on lots zoned as single-family.

This bill builds upon recent changes to accessory dwelling unit (ADU) law, supported by the League, which allow three units on a single-family parcel. At the request of the property owner, the local jurisdiction must allow all lots of at least 2,400 square feet to be split into two approximately equal lots by ministerial action; there could be a 40 percent/60 percent split but neither lot could be smaller than 1,200 square feet.

California's housing crisis is fueled by restrictive zoning, as over 70 percent of our state is zoned as single-family residential. We currently have a statewide housing shortage of approximately 3.5 million homes. Homeownership in California is at its lowest rate since World War II. More and more often, home buying is becoming a privilege only available to the wealthiest. In most major California cities, fewer than 42 percent of households earn enough to purchase even the typical entry-level home. As a result, many renters will have little to no option to enter the housing market and begin to build equity. In addition, this problem has a disproportionate impact on Black and Latino households.

The type of "missing middle" housing, or medium density housing, that this bill is trying to incent is appropriate for renters or first-time homebuyers. The new housing must comply with local objective design standards, unless the standards would physically preclude either of the two units from being at least 800 square feet in area, so it

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should fit into existing neighborhoods. In addition, there are significant renter protections against displacement and short-term rentals are prohibited in these new developments.

**The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports SB 9 as an important step toward addressing the “missing-middle” problem and ameliorating California’s housing crisis, and we respectfully request your signature. Thank you.**

Sincerely,



Carol Moon Goldberg  
President