



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 10 (Wiener) – Planning and zoning: housing development: density –  
REQUEST FOR GOVERNOR’S SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

**The League of Women Voters of California writes to request your signature on SB 10 (Wiener),** which would provide affordable homes to more Californians by easing some of the barriers to building small multifamily developments.

**California’s housing crisis, and our residents’ historic rent burden, is fueled by restrictive zoning and preferred treatment of single-family homes.** California has enjoyed explosive population growth. Yet our approach to housing has not kept pace.<sup>1</sup> We suffer from a deficit of 3.5 million homes.<sup>2</sup> This scarcity feeds poverty, homelessness, and sprawl, and erodes the stability of the middle class. One of the key factors contributing to displacement and rent burden is undersupply of “missing middle” housing or medium-density housing near jobs and transit. This sort of housing is currently banned in over 70 percent of California.<sup>3</sup>

Our housing crisis worsens each year and increasingly lower-income workers cannot afford housing close to their jobs, creating more and more greenhouse gas emissions as they commute long distances.

SB 10 allows cities to adopt resolutions to rezone neighborhoods for increased density of up to ten homes per parcel in transit-rich areas and urban infill sites.

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, Hans. 2017. “California’s Population.” Public Policy Institute of California. Accessed October 2019 at <http://bit.ly/PPICPop>

<sup>2</sup> Woetzel, J., Mischke, J., Peloquin, S. and Weisfield, D. (2016). “A Tool Kit to Close California’s Housing Gap: 3.5 Million Homes by 2025.” McKinsey Global Institute, McKinsey & Company. October 2016. Accessed May 2020 at [bit.ly/CAHousingGap](http://bit.ly/CAHousingGap)

<sup>3</sup> Cowan, Jill. “Should California Get Rid of Single-Family Zoning?” New York Times, 20 June 2019. [nyti.ms/31EWJvb](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/20/us/politics/california-single-family-zoning.html)

This provides cities with a new tool to rezone for gentle, middle-income density in a streamlined, expedited way, as the rezoning ordinances are not subject to CEQA. Currently, this type of rezoning can take years and face lawsuits, costing significant taxpayer funds. The legislation does not change local height limits, setbacks, and objective design standards. When the local jurisdiction passes such a resolution, it can choose whether the particular project will be ministerial/by right or subject to discretionary approval.

SB 10 retains local control, as this bill simply **authorizes** local governments to rezone neighborhoods but does not **require** this rezoning. Its main effect is to allow these projects to bypass CEQA, thereby saving time and allowing projects to be completed faster.

**The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports SB 10 as an important step toward addressing the “missing-middle” problem and ameliorating California’s housing crisis, and we respectfully request your signature.**

Sincerely,



Carol Moon Goldberg  
President