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September 12, 2023

The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 4 (Wiener): Planning and zoning: housing development: higher education institutions and religious institutions
As Amended – September 1, 2023 – Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 of the state's counties, respectfully requests your signature on SB 4 by Senator Scott Wiener, which enacts the Affordable Housing on Faith and Higher Education Lands Act of 2023, which would require a housing development project to be a use by right on land owned by independent higher education institutions or religious institutions, until January 1, 2036.

SB 4 would streamline affordable housing construction, making it easier, faster, and cheaper for faith-based institutions and nonprofit colleges that want to do so. Many of these organizations are already community anchors, and this would help them build stable, safe, affordable housing for local residents and families and open doors to high-resource neighborhoods.

Homelessness is an urgent humanitarian crisis with an estimated 172,000 unhoused individuals and countless others who are housing insecure up and down the state. This situation is due in part to the state's housing affordability crisis. Research shows that California needs millions of more homes than it currently has just to house the people already here. This shortage of homes has caused homelessness and housing costs to skyrocket.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity) is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME, Plan CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness

system that is effective and accountable including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. SB 4 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Accountability and Housing pillars.

SB 4 would ensure that churches, faith institutions, and nonprofit colleges are able to build affordable housing on their land without having to experience the delays and uncertainties associated with the rezoning and discretionary approval process. Accordingly, SB 4 is an important tool in mitigating barriers to the development of affordable housing and would provide additional affordable housing opportunities for our residents.

It is for these reasons that CSAC respectfully requests your signature on SB 4. If you have any questions or concerns about our position, please do not hesitate to reach me at mneuburger@counties.org.

Respectfully,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

cc: Ronda Paschal, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
The Honorable Scott Wiener, Senator, 11th District
The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations