



## Senator Scott Wiener, 11<sup>th</sup> Senate District

### Senate Bill 48 – Right to Shelter

#### SUMMARY

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SB 48 seeks to expand shelter access in California, as a means of ensuring homeless people have a safe place to be and as a way of helping homeless people transition off the streets and into permanent housing.

As we look at the issues impacting our state, the lack of access to shelter, services, and permanent housing for our unhoused residents is a place where we must do more. It should not depend on what city or county you live in. All of our residents deserve access to clean and safe shelter that will give them the opportunity to attain permanent housing or services they need.

#### BACKGROUND/EXISTING LAW

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California has a growing homelessness crisis. Homelessness is a diverse problem, but one glaring aspect of the problem is the number of unsheltered homeless in our state. California accounts for about half of all unsheltered homeless in the nation, despite having about 15% of our nation's population.

We must do more to shelter our unhoused population - to ensure people have a safe and humane place to be, with a goal of transitioning people off the streets and into permanent housing.

While some California counties do a very good job sheltering homeless residents, in various counties, there are either no shelter beds at all, only a tiny number, only seasonally available shelter, or no shelter access specific to youth. Additionally, some counties leave over 75 percent of their homeless residents unsheltered. California's homeless population and the percentage of that population which is unsheltered remains the highest in the nation.

#### PROBLEM

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The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that in 2017 California accounted for nearly half of all unsheltered people in the country (49% or 91,642 people). This means,

unequivocally, that California is failing to provide the services and resources necessary to care for thousands of people, night after night, year after year. Given the size of our homeless population, it is critical that the state play a role in ensuring all of our residents have access to shelter.

#### SOLUTION

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SB 48, currently an intent bill, seeks to expand shelter access in California and to do so in a geographically equitable way.

SB 48 does *not* seek to establish a New York City-style ever-growing right to shelter, since an overly aggressive right to shelter can perpetuate homelessness and divert resources from permanent housing.

SB 48's goal is to expand shelter access and to ensure expanded shelter access dovetails with and complements California's paramount goal: to transition homeless people into permanent housing.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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