



MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA
CITY OF LONG BEACH

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
California State Senate, Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 112
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Senate Bill 1053 (Leno) – Housing discrimination: applications

Dear Chairwoman Jackson:

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I am pleased to support Senate Bill 1053 (Leno). This bill would amend the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) to clarify that housing subsidy vouchers would be a protected source of income. Long Beach supports efforts to maximize funding for the enhancement of affordable housing within the City.

California is experiencing high housing costs that crowd out family spending on basic necessities, such as food and health care. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, the poorest 25% of California households spend on average 67% of their income for housing. Though the Federal Housing Choice Vouchers provides significant rental subsidies to many low-income families, families are forced to return their vouchers to their local housing authority because they cannot find a landlord willing to accept them. Source of income discrimination is illegal under the FEHA, but the law has been interpreted to exclude vouchers. SB 1053 would provide all Californians with a full and fair opportunity to seek housing by ensuring that landlords cannot deny applicants because they receive federal rental subsidies.

Providing voucher holders with equal housing opportunity is crucial to addressing California's ongoing housing crisis and ensuring economic mobility. These vouchers are an effective means of ensuring that children are not trapped in areas of concentrated poverty. For these children, the opportunity to move to a more economically diverse neighborhood leads to improved health, greater academic success, and long-term economic mobility. Long Beach is supportive of amending the FEHA to provide low-income families the same opportunity to apply for housing as other Californians, tearing down unnecessary barriers that perpetuate a cycle of poverty.

Given these reasons, the City of Long Beach supports SB 1053.

Sincerely,

Mayor Robert Garcia
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Speaker-Elect Anthony Rendon, State Assembly, 63rd District
The Honorable Ricardo Lara, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Janet Nguyen, State Senate, 34th District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 64th District
The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, State Assembly, 70th District
The Honorable Mark Leno, State Senate, 11th District

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