

Prop 2: Use Millionaire's Tax Revenue for Homelessness Prevention Housing Bonds Measure

Informational Resources

“A yes vote supports authorizing the state to use revenue from Proposition 63 (2004)—a 1 percent tax on income above \$1 million for mental health services—on \$2 billion in revenue bonds for homelessness prevention housing for persons in need of mental health services.

A no vote opposes authorizing the state to use revenue from Proposition 63 (2004) on \$2 billion in revenue bonds for homelessness prevention housing for persons in need of mental health services.”

- Ballotpedia

“YES on 2 will help establish and strengthen partnerships between doctors, law enforcement, mental health and homeless service providers to help ensure care is coordinated and tailored to meet the needs of each person suffering from mental health illness and homelessness, or who is at great risk of becoming homeless. Without the foundation of a stable home connected to mental healthcare, people suffering from serious mental illness are unable to make it to doctors' appointments and specialized counseling services, often showing up in emergency rooms as a last resort... Prop. 2 brings NO COST TO TAXPAYERS—we simply need voter approval to cut through red tape and focus on building supportive housing for people who are homeless and need mental health services... Helping people suffering from serious mental illness and homelessness is not easy. But together, we can help prevent more deaths on our streets and provide critical intervention by building supportive housing connected to mental health treatment and services.”

- Official Argument in Support of Prop 2, California Voter Guide. Written by Zima Creason, President of Mental Health America of California (MHAC), Chief David Swing, President of California Police Chiefs Association, and Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, Former Member of National Advisory Mental Health Council of the National Institute of Mental Health

“Proposition 2 is... costly—up to \$5.6 Billion (\$140 million x 40, for 40- year bonds) to raise \$2 billion for housing projects. It won't all go to housing, because housing bureaucrats have already guaranteed themselves \$100 million (5% of the \$2 Billion), admittedly far more than needed to run the program, and have also agreed between themselves to take the entire \$140 million yearly as “administrative expenses,” whether or not they need that amount to pay off the bonds. Developer subsidies (low interest deferred loans that developers will use to build and purchase \$2 Billion in valuable California housing, plus up to 50% operating subsidies) effectively cost the public even more...

[Prop 2 also d]oes nothing to address systemic legal barriers, like limited state protection against restrictive local zoning, that make it very difficult to build supportive housing for groups like the severely mentally ill. Neighborhoods often fight hard to keep them out. It is senseless to pay out billions in interest and expenses to borrow money that may sit unspent because of local opposition to supportive housing projects with severely mentally ill tenants.

The Voters dedicated Proposition 63 money to treatment, which prevents homelessness, in 2004. That is where it should go.”

- National Alliance on Mental Illness, Contra Costa County

“Housing improves health for the same reasons that homelessness is deleterious. A clean, dry, secure environment is fundamental to personal hygiene (including wound care and dressing changes), medication storage (refrigeration of insulin, safe storage of needles), and protection from assault and the elements. Private space allows for the establishment of stable personal relationships; housing has been shown to reduce risky sexual behaviors. A stable residence facilitates effective interaction with others, including treatment providers and social support systems, and increases adherence to treatment plans including regular meals and keeping appointments. Housing may reduce anxiety and consequently reduce stress-related illnesses. In these ways, housing both promotes healing and prevents the onset of new illnesses.”

- *Housing is Healthcare*, a statement published by National Health Care for the Homeless Council

“Even if homeless individuals with mental illnesses are provided with housing, they are unlikely to achieve residential stability and remain off the streets unless they have access to continued treatment and services. Research has shown that supported housing is effective for people with mental illnesses (National Mental Health Association, 2006).”

- *Mental Illness and Homelessness*, a statement by the National Coalition for the Homeless

Jewish Resources

“It is the halacha that the first obligation a person has is to do whatever is required to find healing from [their] illness”

- HaRav Asher Weiss, Responsa Minchat Asher 134

“It is a joy to live in one's own house.”

- Moed Katan 2:4

“The one who rented a house to his fellow, in the rainy season, he cannot kick him out from Sukkot until Pesach [this is the winter/rainy season]. If [he rented to him] in the summer, he must have thirty days. And in large cities, whether the rainy season or the summer, twelve months.”

- Mishnah Bava Metzia 8.6

“If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements in the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. Rather, you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs... Give to him readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return the Lord your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land.”

- Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Conclusion

Our Voter Education Night group started the conversation fairly torn on this issue. They could see both funding for mental health care and funding for housing as causes that could be supported based on our Jewish values. But after careful review, they believed that funding housing would ultimately be more effective based on the research published in *Housing is Healthcare* and *Mental Illness and Homelessness* (see above). Our group cited Deuteronomy 15:7-11 (see above) in their argument that we need to provide shelter to those in need as progressive Jews. Their ultimate conclusion was that their Jewish values supported voting yes on Prop 2.