



COUNCIL AGENDA: 2/6/2024

ITEM: 3.5

FILE NO: 24-68404

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Toni J. Taber, CMC
City Clerk

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Support for Proposition 1

Recommendation

Adopt a resolution taking a position in support for Proposition 1 on California's March 5, 2024 primary election, and authorizing the City Manager's Office to issue letters of support in accordance with Council direction.

CEQA: Not a Project, File No. PP17-010, City Organizational and Administrative Activities resulting in no changes to the physical environment. (Mayor and Cohen)

[Rules and Open Government referral 1/24/2024 – C.2]

RULES AGENDA: 1/24/2024

ITEM: C.2



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Mayor Matt Mahan
Councilmember David Cohen

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR
PROPOSITION 1

DATE: January 18, 2024

APPROVED:

DATE: 1-18-2024

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution taking a position in support for Proposition 1 on California's March 5, 2024 primary election, and authorizing the City Manager's Office to issue letters of support in accordance with Council direction.

DISCUSSION

California's failed mental health care system allows thousands of people suffering from serious mental health illnesses to slip through the cracks, committing many of them to a miserable life struggling to survive on our streets. While this is not the only or even the main cause of homelessness, we have all witnessed how this failure has contributed to the crisis today. We see it as we drive to work, as the same man yells profanities at the sky for the 9th consecutive day. We see it in our own families, as we try again and again to get support for a loved one but that support simply doesn't exist and, even when it does, the person refuses to use it. Our state deserves a coherent and effective strategy that modernizes the systems for those grappling with the challenges of mental health, substance abuse and homelessness. To do this, we must reform the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and increase the supply of treatment beds.

Passed by the voters in 2004 as a tax on Californians with incomes over \$1 million, MHSA generates \$2-\$3 billion per year to provide mental health care and substance abuse treatment, yet it's not serving those with the most acute needs. Most of the funding flows directly to counties who have plenty flexibility on how they provide services, but to receive treatment through programs funded by MHSA, people must have a diagnosed mental illness and substance use disorder. Proposition 1, which voters will have the opportunity to approve in March's primary election, would remove this dual diagnosis requirement and compel counties to spend more of their MHSA dollars on housing and direct supportive services.

Proposition 1 would also approve a \$6.4 billion bond against MHSF dollars to build as many as 11,150 new treatment beds and housing - and 26,700 outpatient treatment slots - for people suffering from mental health illnesses or substance use disorders. Over the course of fifty years, our mental health care system went from having over 300 psychiatric beds per 100,000 residents down to just 12 beds per 100,000 residents today. We desperately need more of both in-patient and out-patient treatment beds to serve the thousands of residents suffering from behavioral health challenges who aren't getting the help they need today.

The Governor and the Legislature have implemented important mental health reforms in recent years, such as CARE Courts and conservatorship reform. These are important but incremental efforts. We must rebuild a system that helps those struggling with serious mental illness and addiction and make our entire community a better place by putting our weight behind reforms like Proposition 1 that finally give us the tools we need to combat this crisis.