



SB 802 – Women’s Housing Priority Act

Expanding access to safe housing for homeless women and survivors.

SUMMARY

SB 802 expands access to secure housing options for our most vulnerable populations, including women. This bill will require the Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) to consider individuals who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking when allocating funding to homeless shelters and housing assistance programs.

BACKGROUND

One in five women who become homeless in California do so to escape violence and abuse by an intimate partner.¹ More than 40% continue to experience domestic violence after becoming homeless, often while staying in co-ed shelters or unsheltered environments.¹ As the need for safe, reliable housing grows, resources remain limited, leaving more women at risk of living on the streets.

Homeless women also face higher rates of diagnosed mental health conditions, suicidal ideation, and post-traumatic stress.¹ The trauma that contributes to their homelessness is often compounded by existing threats of sexual violence, exploitation, and fear in male-dominated shelter settings.¹

Women are also disproportionately affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and dating violence.¹ These experiences frequently lead to housing instability and make it harder to access or remain in shelter programs that are not trauma-informed or women specific.¹

Despite the clear need, California’s shelter and housing systems frequently lack capacity for women-only or gender-specific services. Women fleeing violence, especially those with children, face significant challenges in finding safe shelter.² These service gaps lead to longer periods of homelessness and a reduction in vital services.

THE PROBLEM

57% of women experiencing homelessness cited domestic violence as the primary reason for their homelessness, this number increases to **80% for women with children** in their care.² Once homeless, single women often face extraordinarily high levels of violence, both before and after losing stable housing.³

Despite the identified need for women-only facilities, nearly all homeless shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing in California are developed as co-ed, with their populations being over **90% male**.³ These environments can feel unsafe or re-traumatizing for women, especially those fleeing violence. In an Urban Institute study, more than 40% of homeless women said they were repeatedly harassed or threatened, 38% witnessed an attack, 35% were attacked themselves, and more than 20% said they were forced to take part in **unwanted sexual activity**.³

There is a critical need for safe, stable, and trauma-informed housing options for women and individuals experiencing homelessness due to domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking.

THE SOLUTION

SB 802 will ensure shelters providing trauma-informed care, especially those serving women, are not overlooked in funding decisions. HCD will consider this population when distributing funding through its Homekey, Multifamily Housing, and Homeless Housing Assistance, and Prevention Programs. By doing so, SB 802 expands access to safe, supportive housing for women and children, ensuring no woman or child are left on the street.

¹ UCSF Statewide Report on Homelessness PubMed - Women Experiencing Homelessness

² LA Times - Intimate partner violence

³ LA Times - Report on Single Homeless Women The Guardian - Rate of Homelessness is Women

SUPPORT

San Francisco SafeHouse (co-sponsor)
Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (co-sponsor)
My Sister's House
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Mary Elizabeth Inn
Black Women Revolt Against Domestic Violence
National Council of Jewish Women, SF
Community Forward
Freedom Forward
Downtown Women's Center
La Casa De Las Madres
San Francisco Women's Political Committee
San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium
Race & Equity in All Planning Coalition

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