



# Ending Unsheltered Homelessness

This is a crisis.  
It's time to treat it with the urgency it deserves.





## Unsheltered Homelessness is

- Not the same as ending “homelessness.”
- Twice as expensive to taxpayers as addressing it.
- Inflicting devastating, irreparable damage, quickly.
- The most visible, the most inhumane...

...and the most **SOLVABLE**  
subset of the much broader housing crisis





# Interim? Why bother?

## Only Permanent Housing ends homelessness

- *A costly, multi-year process with land use, approval, and bureaucratic restraints*
- *For every 1 person exiting homelessness, 4 become homeless*
- *Nothing in life is “permanent.” Why do we care how long they stay ?*

## Languishing on the streets creates chronic conditions

- *Every day diminishes chances of returning to self-sufficiency*
- *Can't prevent homelessness, but can we prevent “chronic homelessness”?*

## Unsheltered inflicts immeasurable cost to society, and people

- *Costs HALF as much to solve than maintain the status quo*

Our metrics are wrong.

What about number of nights spent languishing on our streets per year? Or eradicating “Chronic Homelessness”?

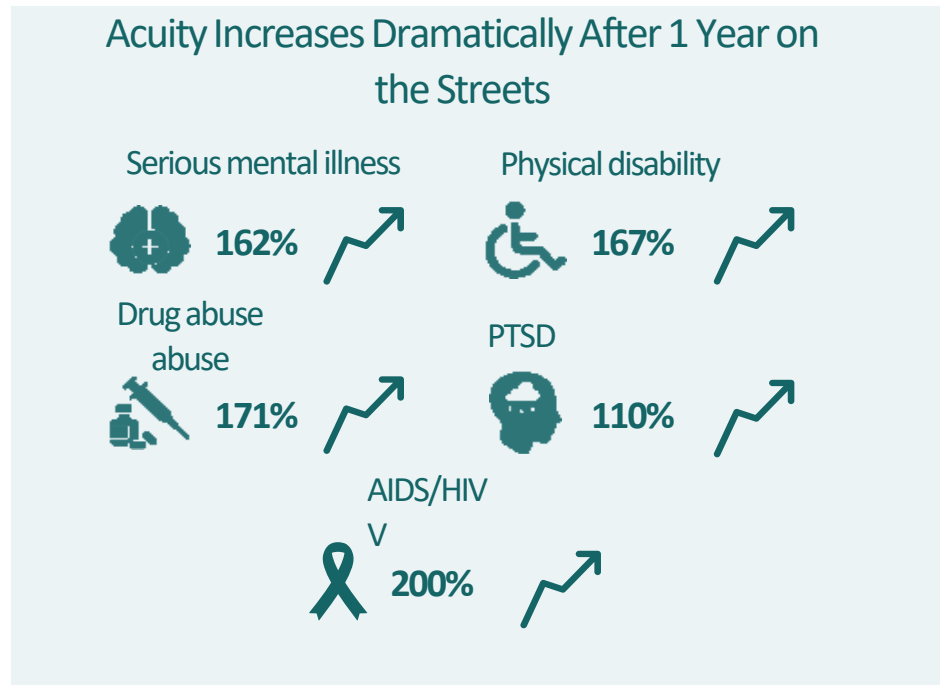
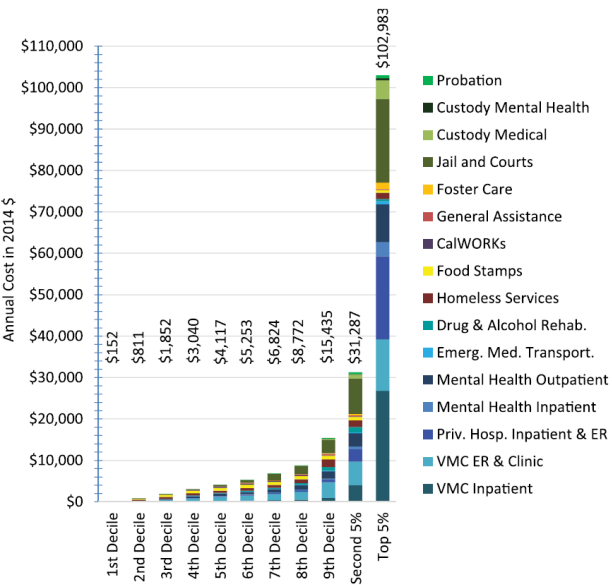


# Prevention of Chronic Homelessness

When people become homeless, only 17% already have a debilitating mental/behavioral health issue that prevented them from maintaining stable housing.

Long wait times for PSH lead to more complex and costly outcomes. Chronically homeless individuals account for the vast majority of public and medical costs.

**FIGURE 3.2:**  
Annual Cost for Residents Homeless in 2012,  
by Cost Decile and Top 5%



### Interim Housing as Prevention



# Permanent Housing alone just can't catch up



## The California Homeless Housing Needs Assessment



Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

We learned that it would take, on average, \$8.1B annually over the next 12 years to solve homelessness in California. The state and federal governments are already projected to commit an average of \$1.2B annually, reducing the gap to \$6.9 billion, only 2.7% of the state's annual budget.

The assessment shows *homelessness is solvable in California*. By committing resources to meet goals based on data in this assessment, California can put in motion an investment plan, policies, and partnerships with local governments that would allow the state to end homelessness by 2035. To put California on a path toward solving homelessness, the state must partner with local governments to invest ongoing resources in evidence-based solutions at levels to match the scale of need.



# Interim Supportive Housing Not the “shelter” of the past



# Don't accept that it's impossible

People don't like "shelter": Everyone gets their own room & a door that locks.

Land is expensive: Borrow temporarily vacant land.

Building codes are onerous: Use Shelter Crisis waivers. This is a crisis, after all.

Construction costs are escalating: Use modular & prefabricated solutions.

NIMBY resistance is fierce: Harness it! Provide beds to people sleeping in the immediate vicinity.

Government budgets are limited: Philanthropy helps unlock public funding.

People don't think it's possible: We must let go of that pessimism. It is.





# Shelter Crisis Act

## State of California

### GOVERNMENT CODE

#### Section 8698.1

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8698.1. Upon a declaration of a shelter crisis, the following provisions shall apply during the period of the emergency.

(a) The political subdivision shall be immune from liability for ordinary negligence in the provision of emergency housing pursuant to Section 8698.2. This limitation of liability shall apply only to conditions, acts, or omissions directly related to, and which would not occur but for, the provision of emergency housing. This section does not limit liability for grossly negligent, reckless, or intentional conduct which causes injury.

(b) The provisions of any state or local regulatory statute, regulation, or ordinance prescribing standards of housing, health, or safety shall be suspended to the extent that strict compliance would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the shelter crisis. Political subdivisions may, in place of such standards, enact municipal health and safety standards to be operative during the housing emergency consistent with ensuring minimal public health and safety. The provisions of this section apply only to additional public facilities open to the homeless pursuant to this chapter.

Municipalities declare a crisis, then can waive:

- Zoning
- CEQA
- Building codes other than state-approved life safety standards
- Red tape processes (competitive bids, etc)
- Discretionary reviews (neighbor opposition)



# Land doesn't need to be available for long

A higher and better use of vacant land:

- Publicly-owned land slated for future development
- Sites controlled by private developers with projects tied up in entitlements or postponed
- Private landowners are eligible for property tax exemptions
- Excess parking or land owned by faith-based organizations
- Can use odd-shaped parcels, remnant parking lots
- Easily moved to the next location by forklift, crane, or disassembled and stored

The long entitlement process in California becomes our friend.





# Harness “NIMBY” passion for healthy communities

- Prioritize placements for people sleeping in the immediate area
- Invest in beautiful exteriors that match the local aesthetic
- Ensure anti-camping ordinances are strictly enforced in the area
- Service provider/operator responsible for cleanliness of the surrounding streets
- Restricted guest policy and consistent monitoring to ensure nonresidents do not linger near the site
- No walk-in services, no loitering
- 24 x 7 staffing (not necessarily “security”)



# It's Taking Off!



15 communities, Over 1,000 beds (so far)  
Capacity to serve 12,000 people in 10 years

San Francisco  
Santa Barbara  
Rohnert Park  
Alameda  
Santa Maria  
Santa Barbara  
County  
Grover Beach  
Modesto  
Watsonville  
Thousand Oaks  
San Jose (2)  
San Luis Obispo  
San Bernardino  
Oakland



# State Policy is Shifting to unsheltered focus



“We need to shift state policy to urgently bring people indoors into safe, dignified interim housing *while* we build the permanent housing needed.”



## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

No. 131

Introduced by Senator Blakespear  
(Coauthors: Senators Allen, Archuleta, Arreguin, Becker, Caballero, Cortese, Grayson, Hurtado, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Stern, Umberg, Weber Pierson, and Wiener)

February 19, 2026  
Relative to housing.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 131, as amended, Blakespear. Housing: unsheltered homelessness. This measure would urge the Governor, relevant state agencies, and all local governments to adopt an urgent and coordinated approach to end and prevent unsheltered homelessness statewide, as specified.

Fiscal Committee: NO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 4, 2024

## To reduce the cost of providing quality, non-congregate interim housing, Senator Becker announces legislation to empower cities to streamline interim housing projects

*SB 1395 The Interim Housing Act gives local governments the tools to fast track building interim housing and scale up efforts to bring people indoors and save lives*

**Sacramento, CA**—Today **Senator Josh Becker** (D-Menlo Park) joined San José Mayor Matt Mahan in introducing SB 1395, which addresses California's housing and homeless needs by expanding access to interim housing.

California has the fourth highest rate of homelessness and the highest rate of unsheltered homelessness in the nation. Despite concerted efforts to increase housing production, California's budget, land, and zoning limitations inhibit sufficient permanent housing construction. As a consequence, California's homeless population reached a record 181,399 individuals in 2023 and will continue to grow without significantly increasing housing production.

The importance of SB 1395, also known as the Interim Housing Solutions Act of 2024, is that it will encourage the development of interim housing by achieving the following:

- Clarifying that relocatable, non-congregate interim housing is eligible for streamlined zoning, thus reducing construction time and costs;

# The Streets Can't be the Waiting Room



# State programs are also shifting to prioritize ending street homelessness



California Department of  
**Housing and Community  
Development**



**California  
Interagency Council  
on Homelessness**

## **B. Purpose And Program Objectives**

The intent of HHAP 6 is to reflect the state's priorities to prevent and expeditiously reduce unsheltered homelessness through homelessness prevention activities and sustain existing Interim Housing Solutions and Permanent Housing Solutions, including long-term sustainability of permanent affordable housing (HSC section 50243(a)). To accomplish these goals, HHAP 6 requires applicants to create and implement Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plans (HSC section 50240).

## **Action Plan Goals**

### **GOAL 1**

#### **Help more people leave unsheltered homelessness**

Increase the annual percentage of people who move into emergency shelter, transitional housing, or permanent housing after experiencing unsheltered homelessness, from 42% to **at least 70%**. Reduce overrepresentation of people who identify as Black or African American, Native American or Indigenous, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander among those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

# Governor Newsom is demanding it

“I’m tired of funding failure”



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

## Model Ordinance: Addressing Encampments with Urgency and Dignity

After the Supreme Court’s decision in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* clarified that officials can take reasonable actions to clear encampments, the Governor signed Executive Order N-1-24, which directed state agencies to develop policies to prioritize addressing encampments on state property while providing reasonable advance notice and partnering with shelter and services providers. That Executive Order also encouraged local governments to adopt similar policies, and to use all available resources and infrastructure, including the historic resources provided by the State, to take urgent action to humanely remove encampments from public spaces. And the Governor directed the California Interagency Council on Homelessness to create guidance, published here, for local governments to follow in creating and implementing those programs.

This model ordinance is intended to provide a starting point that jurisdictions may build from and adjust in creating their own policies. It draws from the state’s proven and workable approach — an approach that, between July 2021 and May 2025, has cleared more than 16,000 encampments and over 311,873 cubic yards of debris from sites along the state right of way. These results demonstrate that the policy is both effective and scalable, offering a sound, adoptable framework for jurisdictions to resolve encampments with urgency and dignity.

This model ordinance is not intended to be comprehensive or to impose a one-size-fits-all approach for every city. Tailoring is expected and appropriate to account for local differences and priorities. For example, a jurisdiction may choose to restrict camping at all times in certain sensitive locations, such as near schools; limit camping to no more than one night in the same location; or require a longer notice period before removal. While specific policies may vary, all local approaches should reflect three basic principles embodied in this model:

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

### EXECUTIVE ORDER N-1-24

**WHEREAS** California is experiencing a homelessness crisis decades in the making, with over 180,000 people estimated to have experienced homelessness on any given night in 2023, including 123,000 people who experienced unsheltered homelessness, living in tents, trailers, and vehicles across the state; and

**WHEREAS** within the first year of my Administration I fast-tracked the development of shelter through Executive Order N-23-20, which directed departments to assess and facilitate the use of available state land and resources for short-term emergency homeless shelters; and

**WHEREAS** since the beginning of my Administration, the State has made unprecedented investments to address the homelessness crisis head on, investing more than \$24 billion across multiple state agencies and departments, including \$4.85 billion in flexible funding to local jurisdictions to prevent and reduce homelessness through Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention grants, \$1 billion in Encampment Resolution Funding to assist local jurisdictions in providing services and supports to people living in encampments, and \$3.3 billion to rapidly expand housing for persons experiencing homelessness through Homekey; and

**WHEREAS** the State has redoubled its commitment to holding local jurisdictions accountable to reduce homelessness, including by strengthening and enforcing requirements that local jurisdictions plan for their fair share of housing and by conditioning state homelessness funding on rigorous reporting and measurable performance metrics; and

**WHEREAS** it is imperative to act with urgency to address dangerous encampments, which subject unsheltered individuals living in them to extreme weather, fires, predatory and criminal activity, and widespread substance use, harming their health, safety, and well-being, and which also threaten the safety and viability of nearby businesses and neighborhoods and undermine the cleanliness and usability of parks, water supplies, and other public resources; and

**WHEREAS** while every jurisdiction must do more to address encampments, state and local agencies taking proactive steps to remove encampments have been stymied in those efforts by lawsuits and injunctions, leaving officials without the tools or guidance necessary to address the crisis on their streets; and

**WHEREAS** in September 2023, I called on the United States Supreme Court to grant review in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson* to clarify that state and local officials can take reasonable actions to resolve encampments while respecting the humanity of all Californians; and

**WHEREAS** in June 2024 the Supreme Court overturned Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals precedent that restricted the government’s authority to enforce laws regulating encampments, recognizing that jurisdictions may tailor their enforcement practices to reflect policy-driven approaches to addressing homelessness; and

**WHEREAS** with the threat of these types of injunctions removed, there is no longer any barrier to local governments utilizing the substantial resources



# Big cities are launching functional zero unsheltered initiatives

“The City of San Jose commits to building enough dignified interim housing options that are appealing, so that no one needs to resort to, nor will they be allowed to sleep on the streets.”

- San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan



# Ending Street Sleeping CAN be done

## We are making it happen!



We have sent men to the moon and decoded the human genome....and we can't figure out how to get roofs over peoples' heads. Seriously?!

Its time to set aside outdated thinking, believe it can be done, and decide to do it.

Governments, community, schools, faith-based organizations....everyone wants to contribute to a real, tangible solution. With Silicon Valley-style passion and optimism, public/private partnerships, and commitment, this CAN and WILL be done.



— Ryan “Nobody” Bauer has been homeless for 30 years.  
Sam Whiting/The Chronicle

**We can't afford unsheltered  
homelessness**

**Adrian Covert, Bay Area Council**

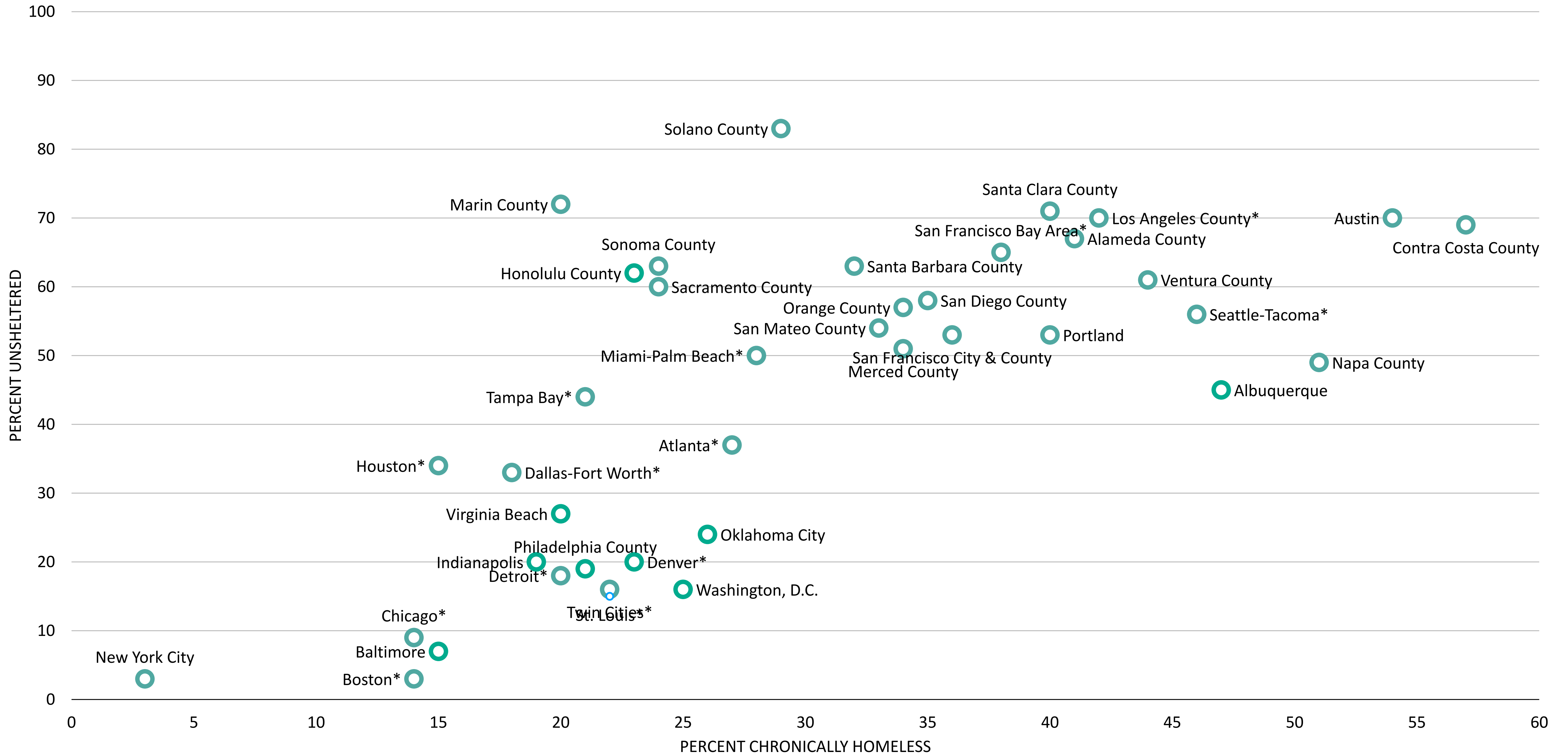
# Encampments = Worst Possible Outcome

1. Worst for Health and Safety
2. Worst return on investment
3. Politically unsustainable

# ENCAMPMENTS ARE WORST FOR HEALTH + SAFETY

- 26x more likely to die from alcohol/drugs
- 11x more likely to die from car accidents
- 10x more likely to die by homicide
- 5x more likely to die by suicide
- Majority of unsheltered women report sexual assault while on the streets
- Accumulated trauma leads to chronic homelessness

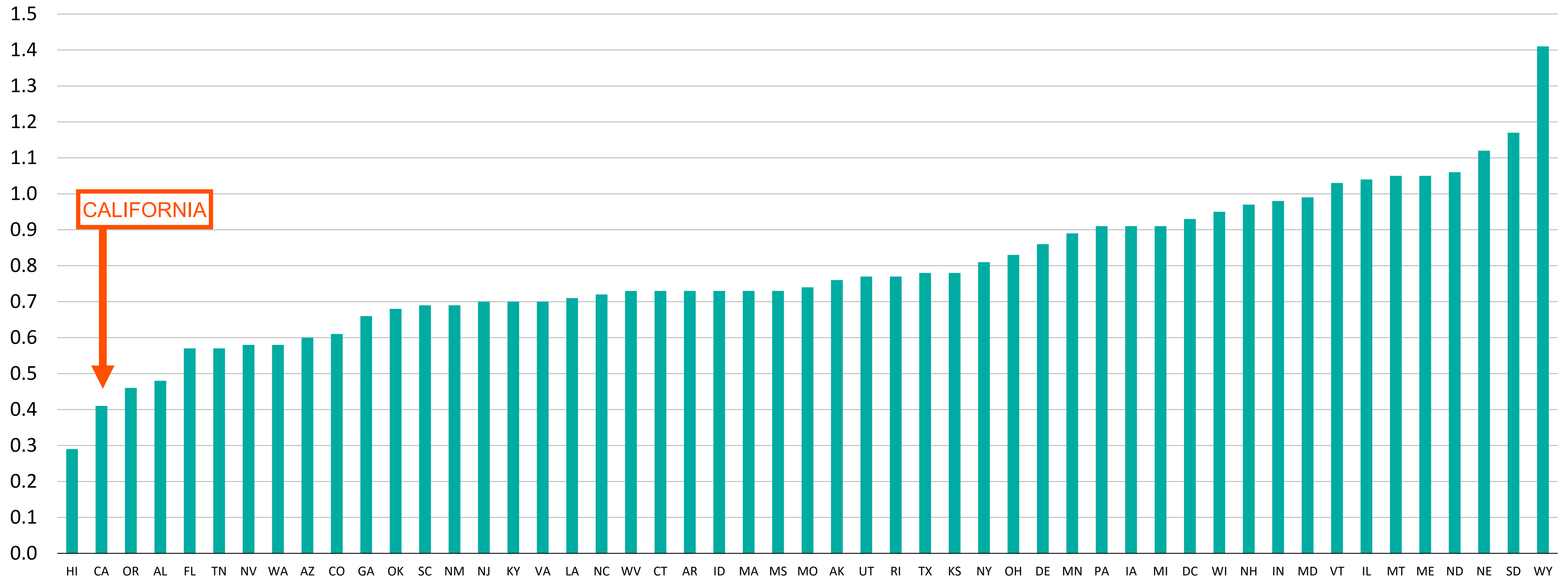
# CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS IS A SHELTER PROBLEM



# ENCAMPMENTS DELIVER WORST RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Justice
- Emergency medicine
- Fires
- Cleanup
- Outreach/Administration
- $\approx$  \$25,000-\$50,000 per unsheltered individual per year

# CA's shelter inventory ranks 49th



\*Due to the cancelled 2021 PIT, 2021 unsheltered numbers are estimated by splitting difference between 2020 and 2022 figures.  
All PH means all permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and other permanent housing (housing with services as identified in 2022 HMIS Data Standards)  
All Shelter means all emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing

# POLITICALLY UNSUSTAINABLE

1. Top voter concern
2. Proposition 1 / BAHFA warning
3. Grants Pass + Newsom Executive Order on Encampments + SB 1395 (Becker)



# INTERIM HOUSING

1. Stabilize individuals
2. Restore public spaces
3. Regain public trust
4. Pays for itself

