



Item Number: 16

City Council / Board of Directors

Written Communications

Meeting of: May 6, 2025

Submitted By:

Keith C. Metzler, City Manager

Subject:

Providing a letter to the Regional Public Affairs Manager of the League of California Cities, the California Legislature Position Letter Portal, Senator Valladares, and Assemblyman Carrillo opposing SB 634 (Perez)

Recommendation:

That the Honorable City Council authorize the Mayor to execute and submit a letter to the Regional Public Affairs Manager of the League of California Cities, the California Legislature Position Letter Portal, Senator Valladares, and Assemblyman Carrillo formally opposing SB 634 (Perez).

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Strategic Plan Goal:

This item affects the City's ability to address homelessness within the City and, therefore, relates to Strategic Goal D – Reduce Homelessness.

Background:

In February 2025, Senator Perez introduced Senate Bill 634, Homelessness: Civil and Criminal Penalties. The intent of SB 634 (Perez), as amended on March 26, 2025, is to limit the ability of local and state governments to respond to homelessness by prohibiting the adoption of any regulations or policies that would impose civil or criminal penalties on unhoused individuals. Without the ability to pursue these penalties, the City will be severely restricted in responding to and reducing health and safety concerns within the community caused by the homeless population.

Since 2017, the City has expanded its efforts to reduce homelessness. This includes forming a Homeless Engagement Team, with four full-time Homeless Engagement Officers dedicated to assisting our homeless population with finding shelter and utilizing

local services. A Homelessness Solutions Task Force was also created by the Victorville City Council to find solutions to homelessness in the City. Additionally, the City established the Wellness Center, a low-barrier facility offering wrap-around services to homeless individuals. The Wellness Center was opened in December 2023, costing approximately \$40 million to build and having an annual cost of \$3 million to operate. The Code Compliance Department relies on the ability to enforce the City's municipal code to address trespassing and homeless encampments, and to connect unhoused individuals to shelter, recuperative care, and medical services, such as those provided by the Wellness Center.

Discussion:

One of the City's Strategic Plan goals, Strategic Goal D, is to reduce homelessness. The Code Compliance Department has been actively working toward achieving this goal by implementing a number of programs and remedies designed to assist the unhoused population. By utilizing a citation and placement approach, the Homeless Engagement Team builds a relationship with homeless individuals that assists with connecting them to resources and services that improve their wellbeing. The City has a responsibility to uphold the rights of individuals as well as the broader community and SB 634 (Perez) would hinder these efforts. SB 634 (Perez) would create a barrier to maintaining the safety and cleanliness of the community, and protecting public spaces and local businesses from unlawful activity. By ensuring due process is followed before imposing a penalty or fine for violation of the municipal code, the City is able to remedy issues regarding homelessness in a meaningful way.

An Executive Order was signed by Governor Newsom in November 2024 encouraging local governments to adopt policies addressing homeless encampments at the risk of losing access to state funding targeting homelessness. In 2024 the City received nearly \$6.6 million in grant funding to address the needs of the homeless population. If SB 634 (Perez) is passed, local governments will be stripped of their authority to enforce strategies aimed at reducing homelessness within their communities, directly contradicting the Governor's Executive Order and impeding the City's efforts of addressing homelessness.

The League of California Cities, along with a broad coalition of local governments, public safety leaders, and businesses, strongly oppose SB 634 (Perez). Per the League of California Cities, "SB 634 severely limits cities' ability to respond to the growing homelessness crisis in communities across California by prohibiting local governments from adopting any regulation, policy, or guidance that imposes civil or criminal penalties on a person experiencing homelessness". Therefore, the League is requesting cities send a letter opposing SB 634 (Perez) to the Regional Public Affairs Manager of the League of California Cities, the California Legislature Position Letter Portal, Senator Valladares, and Assemblyman Carrillo.

SB 634 (Perez) would have significant negative impacts on the operations of the Code Compliance Department, jeopardize the possibility of receiving state funding to address homelessness, and put the health and safety of the residents and businesses in the City

of Victorville at risk. Staff recommends the Council authorize the Mayor to execute and submit a letter to the Regional Public Affairs Manager of the League of California Cities, the California Legislature Position Letter Portal Senator Valladares, and Assemblyman Carrillo formally opposing SB 634 (Perez).

Attachments: A. Formal Letter of Opposition