



PREVENTING VIOLENCE  
AND DEVELOPING  
YOUTH LEADERS

March 20, 2015

Assembly Member Reginald Jones-Sawyer  
State Capitol, Room 4164  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Tel: (916) 319-2059  
Fax: (916) 319-2159

Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 162  
Sacramento, California 95814  
Tel: 916.319.2085  
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Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer and Members of the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee:

Youth ALIVE!, a violence prevention and intervention non-profit based in Oakland, supports AB 396, a bill that will prohibit housing discrimination against individuals with criminal records and their families. AB 396 addresses a critical need to ensure formerly incarcerated individuals are able to find stable housing, reunify with their families, and be set up for success upon reentry into their communities.

A stable place to live is fundamental to becoming and remaining a productive citizen. Therefore, housing discrimination creates an enormous barrier for those trying to reintegrate into society. The effects reverberate into the futures of both those who are directly discriminated against as well as their families. Allowing people with a criminal record to access housing without an automatic denial is a critical component for supporting the rebuilding of lives and reunification of families.

California has one of the highest rates of recidivism (61%) and ranks third nationwide in having the largest homeless population. Furthermore, recent studies demonstrate an increasing relationship between incarceration and homelessness. Due to the historical and current disproportionate incarceration rate of people of color, this group is adversely affected by housing discrimination.

Although California and other states nationwide have begun to pass "ban the box" laws as an attempt to address widespread employment discrimination based on a criminal record, similar action is needed to address housing discrimination.

Youth ALIVE is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Our Tax ID is 94-3143254.

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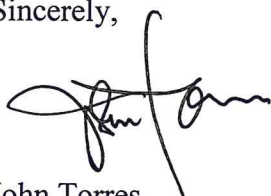
ANNE C. MARKS  
Executive Director  
Youth ALIVE!  
Oakland, CA

Specifically, AB 396 will increase access to housing for people with criminal records by:

- Prohibiting housing providers from discriminating against people based on their prior criminal records.
- Ensuring people with criminal records are eligible for subsidized housing.
- Ensuring people with criminal records are able to live with family members.

Youth ALIVE! believes an individual should not be denied access to housing and no family should continue to suffer indefinitely, simply because of one person's past involvement with the criminal justice system. Additionally, family members should not be punished for providing shelter to their loved ones. AB 396 is an important step towards addressing California's costly cycle of recidivism and homelessness. For this reason, we support AB 396 and we urge you to support it as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Torres', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Torres  
Deputy Director  
Youth ALIVE!  
3300 Elm St., Oakland, CA 94609  
510.594.2588

cc: Irona Lofton, Women's Foundation of California, Women's Policy Institute