

1 [Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 326 (Eggman) and Assembly Bill No. 531 (Irwin) -
2 Modernize California’s Behavioral Healthcare System]

3 **Resolution supporting Governor Gavin Newsom’s 2024 ballot initiative proposal to**
4 **modernize California’s behavioral healthcare system, which includes California State**
5 **Senate Bill No. 326, an update of the Mental Health Services Act authored by Senator**
6 **Susan Talamantes Eggman, and California State Assembly Bill No. 531, a bill authored**
7 **by Jacqui Irwin that would place before the voters a \$4.68 billion General Obligation**
8 **Bond intended to build at least 10,000 new behavioral health beds across California**
9 **community treatment campuses and facilities.**

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11 WHEREAS, In San Francisco, 52% of people experiencing homelessness suffer from
12 mental health issues and/or substance use disorders and among Californians experiencing
13 homelessness, nearly 40,000 have a severe mental illness, and over 36,000 have a chronic
14 substance use disorder; and

15 WHEREAS, Within the first five months of 2023 alone, 346 people died in San
16 Francisco from accidental drug overdoses; and

17 WHEREAS, As California began shuttering State hospitals in the 1950s and shifting
18 responsibility to counties to finance and implement mental health services, people
19 experiencing severe mental illness became overrepresented in the State’s carceral system.
20 As of May 2023, more than 50% of over 96,000 inmates incarcerated in California State
21 prisons were being treated for varying levels of mental illness; and

22 WHEREAS, As the number of mental health treatment beds per 100,000 people in
23 California decreased 31% from 1998 through 2017, the State currently faces a shortage of at
24 least 6,000 beds to care for patients with mental health disorders and its need for treatment
25 beds will continue to grow; and

1 WHEREAS, California’s lack of mental health infrastructure and facilities to meet acute,
2 subacute, and community residential levels of care has contributed to system bottlenecks, and
3 California’s five State hospitals, which treat the most critically ill patients, have a severe
4 shortage of beds with wait times of one year or longer; and

5 WHEREAS, The Mental Health Services Act, authored by then-Senator Darrell
6 Steinberg and passed as Proposition 63 by voters in 2004, instituted a 1% income tax on
7 personal income in excess of \$1 million per year to fund a continuum of prevention, early
8 intervention, and service needs for those experiencing or at risk of severe mental illness; and

9 WHEREAS, The MHSA requires reforms to better align with current service gaps
10 across the State, including resources for people with the most acute behavioral health issues
11 and substance use disorders; and

12 WHEREAS, California State Senate Bill No. 320 (SB 326), authored by Senator Susan
13 Talamantes Eggman with the endorsement of Mayor Steinberg, updates the Mental Health
14 Services Act as the Behavioral Health Services Act, expanding services to include treatment
15 for substance use disorders (SUD) alone and allowing counties to use funds in combination
16 with federal funds to expand SUD services; and

17 WHEREAS, SB 326 also requires that 30% of county allocations, which equates to
18 almost \$1 billion per year, be reserved for housing interventions for children and families,
19 youth, adults, and older adults living with severe mental illness, severe emotional disturbance,
20 and/or SUD who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, which
21 include rental subsidies, operating subsidies, shared housing, and family housing; and

22 WHEREAS, As California is currently experiencing an acute behavioral health
23 workforce shortage, SB 326 addresses this issue by providing up to 3% of annual BHSA
24 funds for the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS) to implement a statewide
25 behavioral health workforce initiative; and

1 WHEREAS, California State Assembly Bill No. 531 (AB 531), authored by
2 Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, authorizes a \$4.68 billion General Obligation Bond to be
3 placed on the March 2024 ballot intended to fund the construction, acquisition, and
4 rehabilitation of unlocked, voluntary, community-based residential care settings for individuals
5 with behavioral health needs, increasing the availability of care settings that support
6 rehabilitation and recovery; and

7 WHEREAS, As more than 70% of veterans experiencing homelessness are affected by
8 SUD, AB 531 dedicates a portion of bond funding to be disbursed as grants for new
9 construction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or preservation of affordable multifamily housing to
10 provide interim, transitional, and permanent supportive housing for veterans who are
11 homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and living with behavioral health challenges; now,
12 therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports SB 326 and AB
14 531, which will both be placed before the voters together as a March 2024 ballot initiative;
15 and, be it

16 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the
17 Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to San Francisco's state legislative delegation, the
18 Office of the Chief Clerk of the Assembly, and the Office of the Secretary of the Senate.

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