

The Mercury News

California bill to speed housing for the homeless signed into law

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PUBLISHED: September 26, 2018 at 5:43 pm | UPDATED: September 27, 2018 at 10:36 am

SACRAMENTO — A California proposal to [fast-track housing for the homeless](#) by bypassing some of the local approval hurdles was signed into law Wednesday evening. The bill, carried by Assemblymen David Chiu, D-San Francisco, and Tom Daly, D-Anaheim, takes aim at delays that affordable housing developers say can add cost and uncertainty to projects seeking to address the growing challenge of homelessness in the state.

About one quarter of the nation's homeless and nearly half of those living on the streets are in California, according to the latest federal data.

Advocates for the homeless applauded the governor's decision. "Housing California commends Governor Brown for sending a clear message with the signing of AB 2162: to end homelessness for hundreds of thousands of Californians, we must build permanent, supportive homes," said Lisa Hershey, the organization's executive director, in a statement Wednesday.

In addition to Housing California, the Corporation for Supportive Housing embraced the fast-tracking and urged passage of the legislation.

[Assembly Bill 2162](#) applies to developments that are 100 percent affordable, set aside at least 25 percent of units for the homeless and that include optional support services. It would exempt such projects from environmental reviews and other approvals, making it harder for opponents to slow or block them.

Unlike in temporary or transitional housing, tenants in supportive housing developments sign a lease for an apartment, pay rent and can remain as long as they need. Advocates for the homeless say the model has proven to be more effective than treating people living on the street.

The bill received little public opposition or debate as it moved through the Legislature this year, though nearly all of its support came from Democratic lawmakers.