

Communication from Public

Name: John W. Heath, President of United Homeowners' Association

Date Submitted: 01/19/2021 09:51 PM

Council File No: 21-0002-S18

Comments for Public Posting: Honorable Councilmembers: As President of United Homeowners' Association (UHA), the nonprofit mutual benefit corporation that represents more than 11,000 residents of unincorporated View Park, Windsor Hills and View Heights just outside of the City of Los Angeles, I write to ask for your support of Councilmember Koretz's resolution opposing SB 9 (Atkins). SB 9 is offered as an innocuous bill that allows more homeowners to create duplexes and subdivide single family lots; the truth is that SB 9 is a wolf in sheep's clothing that actually allows the conversion of one single family lot into four subdivided lots with the use of accessory dwelling units and thereby represents a new powerful tool that will further enrich land speculators, developers and Wall Street investors that have already benefitted from the misfortune of many Angelenos that lost their homes during the Great Recession and global pandemic. If you agree with UHA and many other Angelenos who are sick and tired of false promises and who want to see effective solutions to our affordable housing crisis that takes full advantage of the need to reposition newly vacant commercial properties and create more density in areas that make sense with smart land use policies that include meaningful local participation, please stand with UHA and Councilmember Koretz and oppose SB 9. We attach for your consideration the letter we wrote to Senator Atkins last year about another bad bill (SB 1120) that would have similarly been ineffective at creating more affordable housing -- why won't our state legislators stand up for what's right and enact legislation that actually delivers more affordable housing? Thank you for your consideration.



August 9, 2020

Hon. Toni Atkins, President Pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator Atkins:

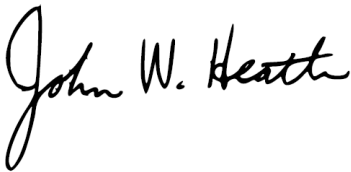
I write on behalf of United Homeowners' Association II ("UHA"), the nonprofit mutual benefit corporation that represents over 11,000 residents of Windsor Hills, View Park, and View Heights in unincorporated LA County, the vast majority of whom are African American homeowners who have lived here for multiple decades. UHA is opposed to SB 1120 and SB 902, together with several other bills included in your Senate Housing Production Package, due to their failure to fund and create more affordable housing (an urgent priority) and the harmful impacts these bills would have on our South Los Angeles neighbors and our community, which includes the largest historic district in the United States designated in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with African American history. While a small handful of our residents have opted to create Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and we expect a few more will follow suit, these bills would open up our community to "by-right" development of up to four dwellings (8 total units if ADUs are included) per single family lot and 10-unit market-rate apartment buildings. Instead of focusing on spurring the development of more *affordable* housing, these market-rate housing bills will increase real estate speculation, accelerate economic exploitation and gentrification, and cause greater displacement of the African American population that has made our South Los Angeles community a historic place.

Rather than attempting to force single family communities like ours to increase market-rate housing density in areas where higher density will harm the environment and disrupt existing neighborhoods, we encourage you to focus on financing and encouraging the development of *affordable* housing along commercial corridors close to transit for our neighbors that are at or below 80% of area median income. We agree with the analyses by Embarcadero Institute and the California Department of Housing & Community Development which recently concluded that California has overperformed in the creation of market-rate housing but has vastly underperformed when it comes to building affordable housing. A critical issue your Housing Production Package fails to address is the urgent need to prioritize and allocate more funding for affordable housing (including the extension of tax credits and bond allocation authority), and unless you and our other state government leaders make more funding for affordable housing an urgent priority, California will continue to fall short on producing the affordable housing units we need.

As someone who has worked in the affordable housing industry for over 20 years, I know that successful development projects require extensive planning and collaboration with local government, business, labor and community representatives to ensure that each of these key stakeholders provides input and receives some benefit from the finished product. SB 1120 and SB 902 would obliterate this process by giving developers all the power and removing any opportunity for input from or collaboration with local policy makers and community members as part of the land use planning, zoning, and entitlement process. This is the same core issue we had with Sen. Wiener's SB 50 earlier this year – the Legislature's ongoing attempts to put market-rate housing developers and real estate speculators in the driver's seat with respect to land

use decisions with no real input from local government or community stakeholders will result in significant adverse economic and environmental impacts on our predominantly African American community while failing to address California's serious need for truly affordable housing. Based on my experience working with a broad spectrum of stakeholders on difficult issues including land use planning, environmental protection, and affordable housing development, I can assure you that the Senate's Housing Production Package will have a much greater chance of succeeding if it is amended to include provisions designed to increase funding for affordable housing and facilitate the development of more affordable housing along commercial corridors near transit via a collaborative local process, and remove "by-right" market-rate housing density increases in the middle of single family communities which will ultimately harm predominantly African American historic neighborhoods across South Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Heath". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John W. Heath, Esq.
Board President
United Homeowners' Association II

c: Hon. Gavin Newsom, Governor
Hon. Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
Hon. Holly Mitchell, Senator – 30th Senate District
Hon. Sydney Kamlager, Assemblymember – 54th Assembly District
Hon. Mark Ridley-Thomas, Supervisor – LA County 2nd District
Hon. Herb Wesson, Councilmember – LA City 10th Council District
Hon. Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Councilmember – LA City 8th Council District
South Los Angeles Alliance for Locally Planned Growth
UHA Membership