



Poll Reveals Strong Support for Large Affordable Housing Bond

Treasurer Chiang & affordable housing advocates release results, call on Governor Brown and Legislative leaders to ‘Think Big’ as they work on housing package

SACRAMENTO—AUGUST 2— Amid Californian’s mounting concern over rising homelessness and out-of-reach rents, California State Treasurer John Chiang and a coalition of affordable housing advocates today released the results of a new poll, which shows strong voter support for a \$6-9 billion statewide affordable housing bond in 2018. Today in California, more than 1 in 3 families can’t afford their rent and 1.5 households pay more than half their income toward housing.

The poll, conducted by JMM Research, found that the electorate is attuned to the state’s housing problems, with 60% of likely November 2018 voters supporting a \$6 billion to \$9 billion statewide affordable housing bond (see attached polling memo).

Earlier this month, Governor Brown and legislative leaders committed to begin tackling the growing housing gap with a housing package that would include a permanent source of state investment in affordable homes; a bond measure to provide a significant, short-term jumpstart to get affordable homebuilding underway; and reforms to speed approval and construction of affordable developments. Housing leaders today said the poll shows voters are ready and willing to pass a housing bond two to three times the amount currently under consideration by the legislature.

“I am encouraged by the recent commitment made by Governor Brown and legislative leaders to tackle a housing shortage so catastrophic in scale that it not only threatens our economic vitality, but fuels inequality, poverty, domestic violence, hardship for our veterans, and growing resignation that the California dream is now out of reach,” said Treasurer Chiang. “When one-fifth of the nation’s homeless reside in our state and most working Californians can no longer even hope to live in the communities in which they work or were once raised, we must think big and act boldly in correctly sizing our public investment.”

Chiang added that, “When 40% of surveyed Californians have someone in their immediate circle of friends and family living on the streets and 60% who have seen high housing costs drive their children and close friends to move away, there is no room for timidity. In light of our polling results, the \$3 billion contained in the current legislation is simply not enough. Voters demand more.”

Robbie Hunter, President of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California said, “We represent hundreds of thousands of blue collar families that are struggling to keep or buy a home. Our catastrophic housing problem is too big to be wallpapered over. A new \$6 billion bond would shelter more than one million Californians in need and create 120,000 family sustaining construction jobs. A \$9 billion bond would shelter 1.7 million Californians and create 180,000 construction jobs. Let’s get this done.”

“Modest-income earners in California are spending more than half of their income on rent,” said Lisa Hershey, executive director of Housing California, an advocacy nonprofit. “The lack of affordable homes pushes hardest on them, making it the single biggest driver of poverty and income inequality, and placing more families at the brink of homelessness.”

Ray Pearl, the California Housing Consortium’s Executive Director said, “Lawmakers are returning home to communities where families are demanding relief from unprecedented housing pressures. Bold action from our legislators and Governor Brown is needed to relieve the heavy toll massive state disinvestment has taken on families, children, and our economy. With significant, renewed investment, we can open the door to affordable homes to more Californians, enhance our economic competitiveness and lift families out of poverty.”

Pat Sabelhaus, board member of California Council for Affordable Housing said, “The Governor and the Legislature are on a roll in achieving bi-partisan two-thirds votes to address the toughest issues of the day. We urge our state leaders to continue their bold leadership by making 2017 the year that the legislature takes giant steps towards addressing the state’s housing crisis.”

The recently completed poll was commissioned as part of the groundwork laid by State Treasurer John Chiang and a coalition of affordable housing advocates to place a large affordable housing bond initiative on the November 2018 ballot should state policymakers fail to act.

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TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Jim Moore, JMM Research
RE: 2018 housing bond survey results
DATE: July 25, 2017

JMM Research conducted a statewide survey¹ of likely voters on behalf of the Advocates for Affordable Housing to gauge voter support for an affordable housing bond that could be placed on the November 2018 ballot by initiative.

This memo outlines some key findings from the research.

Voters strongly support the concept of a statewide affordable housing bond in an amount between \$6 billion and \$9 billion. Approval levels are at or near the 60% threshold, with less than 35% opposed.

Two different bond amounts were tested in a split sample of the survey:

Q: Would you support or oppose a \$6 billion/\$9 billion state bond to provide affordable housing for low-income seniors, families, veterans, homeless & persons with disabilities?

	\$6 Billion	\$9 Billion
SUPPORT	64%	59%
OPPOSE	28%	35%
NO OPINION	8%	6%

This same high level of support was maintained after voters were read the ballot question and fiscal impact statement, which included the annual debt service amounts for each bond.

In a similar 2006 baseline survey JMM Research conducted for Proposition 1C - a \$3 billion housing bond measure - a nearly identical question scored 60% support and 32% opposed. Proposition 1C passed with 58% support.

Many voters have had direct or firsthand exposure to the issue of housing affordability, making the topic 'ripe' and a part of the public discussion:

63% know someone who has moved away because of high housing costs
51% believe they could not afford to live in an average-priced home, if they were moving into their community today
41% have a family member living with them because of housing costs
40% know someone who is, or has been homeless

¹ From May 29 to June 7, 2017, JMM Research interviewed 800 likely November 2018 voters in California via telephone (landline and cell). The margin of error for the full sample was +/- 3.5% at the 95% confidence interval; margins of error for subgroups will be higher.