



Sample:

Op-Ed / Blog Post

This sample Op-Ed or blog post for Housing California applies a California Dream narrative lens to a [previous blog post](#) on similar legislation. See also a [template for writing Op-Eds and blog posts](#).

Building a Brighter Future Starts With a Place to Live

Every Californian should have a decent place to live, including people who have served their time. Over the past several years, California has been working to return people who were incarcerated to their families and communities, especially during the height of the pandemic.

Yet, the reality is that after their release from prison many people lack access to stable housing, which can in turn impact their ability to get a job and stay employed. As they re-enter society, they all too often face a broken system of support. This puts them at risk of homelessness and even returning to prison. The funds that once went to housing people in prison are better spent on helping them find housing when they return to their community.

Here in California, we've always known how to dream big and do things in ways that support everyone in our state. Celebrating difference and diversity is part of what makes our state unique. That's why it's

important to pass legislation like AB 1816 that makes sure California provides people who have served their time with access to stable housing upon release.

When someone has a place to call home that is affordable, they're better equipped to build a life, focus on work, support their family, and contribute to their community.

This issue hits communities of color particularly hard, as Black people and Latinos are overrepresented in prison populations compared to white people. One study concluded that formerly incarcerated people are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public, and in California, 70% of people experiencing homelessness have a history of incarceration.

The Prison Policy Initiative found significantly higher rates of unemployment and homelessness among women who were previously incarcerated, especially women of color. Without viable housing options and support services, women on parole who were victims of domestic violence may have to choose between homelessness or returning to abusive households, putting their lives at risk.

By repairing the cracks in the system, we can change this cycle and aid the communities that welcome them home. In order to do that, California must earmark funds to ensure that formerly incarcerated people are able to find housing and access support services in order to create a better future for themselves.

AB 1816 will establish the Reentry Housing and Workforce Development Program to provide housing and services for people who were incarcerated and are either experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.

Providing housing and supportive services to people after they are released from prison also saves taxpayer money. It costs over \$90,000 per year to incarcerate someone in California; providing housing with supportive services costs about \$20,000. More than 30,000 people will be released every year for the next five years — a targeted housing program will save taxpayers and the state millions of dollars and prevent thousands from becoming homeless.

By providing people who are released from prison a safe, decent place to call home, they can focus on finding work and contributing to their community. California lawmakers must prioritize housing and provide the services people need so they can successfully reenter society after they've served their time. **This is a critical part of how we keep creating the kind of state we love and are proud to call home – for everyone in our community.**

