



CITY OF
T O R R A N C E

GEORGE K. CHEN
MAYOR

June 25, 2025

The Honorable Thomas Umberg, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
1020 N Street, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to SB 634 (Pérez) – The Right to Rest Act

Dear Senator Umberg and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the City of Torrance, I write to respectfully oppose SB 634 (Pérez), the Right to Rest Act. While we recognize and share the bill's intent to protect the dignity of individuals experiencing homelessness, we believe this legislation would undermine the compassionate and effective outreach strategies that are currently making a difference in our community.

The City of Torrance employs a service-first, housing-focused approach to addressing homelessness. Our outreach team—comprising three full-time Outreach Coordinators—works in partnership with our Police Department's Community Lead Officers to engage individuals experiencing homelessness through repeated, personalized interactions. We meet people where they are and help them take steps toward stability, and we enforce our public safety ordinances when they are violated. For individuals with a connection to Torrance, we offer placement in our interim housing program, which includes case management and navigation services designed to transition clients into permanent housing.

Enforcement of local anti-camping ordinances has proven to be essential in challenging cases where individuals, after numerous outreach attempts, continue to decline services. The recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling affirming a jurisdiction's right to enforce such ordinances has reinforced this ability. According to our Outreach Coordinators, the ordinance has helped persuade some individuals to accept housing and services they had previously refused.

The rationale for SB 634 suggests that fines and arrests harm unhoused individuals and obstruct their path to stability. In Torrance, we share these concerns, however the lack of enforcement could very well be associated with the rise in homelessness similar to lack of enforcement to those who commit crimes but must be used in accordance with the unique situation with each individual. If a person is actively pursuing housing or working with a case manager, enforcement action is not taken.

SB 634 would strip cities like Torrance of the discretion we need to address public health and safety while continuing to serve our most vulnerable with compassion and care. We believe this bill is unnecessary and counterproductive to our mission of connecting unhoused individuals with meaningful support and permanent housing.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 634. Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact my office should you have any questions or wish to learn more about our approach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Chen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

George K. Chen
Mayor
City of Torrance

cc. Senator Ben Allen & Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi
Jeff Kiernan, League Regional Public Affairs Manager (via email)
Meg Desmond, League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org