

1 [Motion to Approve a Letter to Governor Gavin Newsom and San Francisco’s State Legislative  
2 Delegation on Lifting the Regional Stay-at-Home Order and on Eviction Protections]

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4 Supplementary Information:

5 Letter of Support approved as attached (see below).

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**Youth Commission**  
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February 1, 2021

The Hon. Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. Scott Wiener  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5100  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. David Chiu  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 4112  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. Phil Ting  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Lifting the Regional Stay-at-Home Order, Eviction Protections.**

Dear Governor Newsom,

The San Francisco Youth Commission is concerned about a number of recent developments at the state level regarding California's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and related crises. On January 26, 2021, you announced that all regional Stay-At-Home orders based on ICU capacity would be lifted and the state would return to the tier-based system, with counties like San Francisco reopening outdoor dining and personal services in the purple tier. On the same day, state legislative leadership and yourself announced a tenant protection and rent relief package, Senate Bill 91, which raises a number of concerns about the prioritization of landlord interests. The Youth Commission has previously expressed concerns with the state and local response to COVID-19,[1] and we are concerned that both of these actions will negatively impact San Francisco and California youth.

Data from the White House Coronavirus Report has shown that although COVID-19 cases are decreasing, the daily average still remains at nearly 20,000 people a day—5 times more than it

was in March 2020. Despite the 26% drop in new cases within a week, California is still at five times the upper limit of high community transmission with half of counties still in the “red zone.”[2] Additionally, emergency department visits relating to COVID-19 have stayed the same for the past five weeks in California. Lifting the stay-at-home order will disproportionately put the lives of Black, Latine, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander people at risk, as these communities continue to lead in COVID-19 deaths, with a death rate of double or more than White and Asian Americans on a national level, according to the APM Research Lab.[3] Given the state’s abysmal record of persecuting Black and Indigenous populations in particular, and the well-established history of hospitals discriminating against Black and Indigenous people when providing (or withholding) treatment, trust in public health institutions is already justifiably low. Basing reopening on the California Department of Public Health’s 4-week projection of whether or not ICU capacity is greater than or equal to 15% is not sufficient or conclusive enough to reopen each region, especially when this projection is only based on the number of ICU patients and not ICU beds. With San Francisco still in the purple tier, while still relaxing restrictions and reopening outdoor dining, the possibility that we will move down to the red tier or better in order for schools to reopen is unlikely.

We are concerned about the apparent departure from scientific evidence in these latest reopening plans as school districts continue to move towards a return to in-person instruction. Without increased funding and logistical support for school districts, returning to in-person schooling will not foster a safe learning environment for the over 6 million students in California. While your Safe Schools for All Plan proposed on December 30, 2020 promises \$2 billion in funding for reopening schools safely, its distribution according to your guidelines is inherently inequitable. With areas of higher COVID-19 transmission unable to meet the threshold to reopen, which are disproportionately low-income communities of color, funds normally spent on schools in those areas would instead be used to reopen schools in more affluent areas. Some large school districts cannot even afford the testing requirements in order to return to in-person learning. Students wary of health risks will likely not attend school, causing short-term chaos and deepening long term educational issues and inequities.

The experience of many disconnected youth during this pandemic, including youth involved with the juvenile justice system, has been one of abandonment. As of January 25, 2021, 185 youth at the Division of Juvenile Justice statewide had been diagnosed with Covid-19, due to the absence of investment in a plan to release youth into supportive communities and transitional or permanent housing, and to meaningfully reduce population density in youth correctional facilities. Given the disproportionately Black and Latine composition of the population detained at DJJ, these failures reinforce and compound existing inequities in California’s pandemic response.

To compound this chaotic situation, the tenant protection and rent relief package contained in Senate Bill 91, while a welcome source of respite for the many tenants who will be able to stay in their homes as a result of the extension of the statewide prohibition on evictions for non-payment of rent, builds troubling inequities into the rent relief portion that will let vulnerable tenants, including families, slip through the cracks. Notably, while landlords may claim 80% of rent due from the state under the rent relief program if they forgive the remaining 20%, the tenant only receives support for 25% of rent due if the landlord does not forgive the rent, just the bare minimum to prevent the landlord from seeking eviction for non-payment. This clearly keeps the door open for landlords to harass tenants who cannot afford to pay rent due to loss of income during the pandemic.

According to an Urban Institute study, 19% of renters nationwide did not pay rent through mid-May 2020, compared to 27% of black renters and 25% of Latine renters.[4] The Urban Institute also reported in April 2020 that younger renters (aged 35 and under) were already disproportionately impacted by high rents, with a third reporting often or sometimes experiencing difficulties paying rent in 2019.[5] Given that 30% of younger household heads reported working in the food and accommodation, entertainment, retail, and transportation sectors, which have been heavily impacted by the pandemic-induced economic crisis, it is clear that young people are facing increased burdens upon entering the workforce during the pandemic. These disparities have not been seriously addressed and resolved by the state, deepening our concern that loopholes in the latest tenant protection measures will further exacerbate them.

We urge the state to not cave to political expediency in deciding when and how to reopen, and to instead focus on providing support to all Californians who are suffering during this pandemic by providing them with the means to stay healthy, safe, and housed without needing to place themselves at risk of exposure.

Sincerely,



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Nora Hylton, Chair  
Adopted on February 1, 2021  
2020-2021 San Francisco Youth Commission

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[1] YC File No. 1920-AL-11.

[2] Coders Against Covid, (Unofficial) WH Coronavirus Task Force Report, accessed January 28, 2021.

[3] APM Research Lab, The Color of Coronavirus: Covid-19 Deaths by Race and Ethnicity in the U.S., accessed January 28, 2021.

[4] Urban Institute, New Data Suggest COVID-19 is Widening Housing Disparities by Race and Income, accessed January 28, 2021.

[5] Urban Institute, COVID-19 Policy Responses Must Consider the Pandemic's Impact on Young Renters and Renters of Color, accessed January 28, 2021.