



March 22, 2018

The Honorable Scott D. Wiener
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
Legislative Office Building, 1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 918 (Wiener) Homeless Youth Act of 2018
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Wiener,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports SB 918 (Wiener), which would establish the Office of Homeless Youth in the Department of Housing and Community Development and sets forth the duties of the office, including, but not limited to, setting specific, measurable goals aimed at preventing and ending homelessness among youth in the state. The bill would require the office to identify funding, policy, and practice gaps across state systems that serve, or hold the potential to serve, young people experiencing homelessness, develop specific recommendations and timelines for addressing these gaps, and report to the Legislature.

According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, 2.5 million children are now homeless each year in America, one in every 30 children in the United States. California accounts for one-fifth of these homeless children, and ranks 48th in child homelessness.¹ Children without stable homes are more than twice as likely as others to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of high school.² Pediatricians routinely care for children coming from unstable living arrangements, who experience stressors often unknown to their more conventionally-housed peers, including transportation challenges, food insecurity, anxiety about where they are going to sleep that night, and the embarrassment of getting off the bus in front of a shelter or motel.

Dr. Obando, Fellow of the AAP, states “As pediatricians, we have the unique responsibility to advocate for our most vulnerable patients. The AAP advocates for policies and programs like rapid re-housing and vouchers that aim to reduce family homelessness and is supporting a major expansion in funding that would eliminate family homelessness..”

SB 918 (Wiener) establishes the Office of Homeless Youth in an attempt to end homelessness among youth in the state of California.

Pediatricians across the state urge you to vote AYE on SB 918 (Wiener). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Higgins Stewart, MD
Resident Representative Member, AAP-CA State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Senate Human Services Committee Members
Office of Honorable Scott D. Wiener, California State Senate (Author)
AAP-CA CEO Kris Calvin; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne; Sarah Anderson, MD, Senior Policy Analyst

1 <https://www.dailynews.com/2014/11/17/homeless-children-increasing-in-southern-california/>
2 <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/homeless-children-and-youth/>