

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF MORE HOUSING IN ORANGE COUNTY

WHEREAS, The cost of housing in Orange County is at record levels due to a deficit of 50,000 to 62,000 homes currently needed for working families in the County, ([OCBC Housing Scorecard 2015](#)); the County's population is rapidly aging, with every age cohort other than the over-65 population shrinking because rising home prices are pushing younger people out of the County ([OC Register, 2016](#)); only 20% of Orange County households can afford the county's median home price; the average asking rent in Orange County is among the highest in the country; and skyrocketing housing prices are hurting both local employers and workers by preventing people from moving to where their skills are demanded; and

WHEREAS, California cannot meet its climate change goals to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions without adding significantly more housing close to job and transit centers, ([LA Times, 2017](#)); and many cities in Orange County have a large disparity between jobs and housing, which according to the Environmental Protection Agency "creates longer commute times, more single driver commutes, loss of job opportunities for workers without vehicles, traffic congestion, and poor air quality." ([EPA, 2014](#)); and as two of the most significant barriers to building affordable housing are community opposition and lack of financing and resultantly, only 5% of new countywide housing construction has been low income housing; and

WHEREAS, a principal cause of the housing shortage is locally enacted land use regulations, including ballot box zoning initiatives and referenda, which often limit the supply and raise the cost of housing, and increase sprawl, traffic, environmental degradation, and racial and economic segregation across communities by pushing housing demand to neighboring communities ([Hsieh and Moretti, 2017](#));



Resolution #18-09

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to ensure affordable housing in Orange County for individuals of all income levels without reducing the quality of life for existing residents, the Democratic Party of Orange County urges each municipality exercising land-use authority within the county to

- 1) approve appropriate new housing developments, including housing within proximity to transit stops, schools, child care centers, and commercial areas; multi-family housing in walkable communities; housing in mixed-use developments; housing for low and very low income individuals and families; and housing that is affordable to and designated for university students, for people with mental and/or physical disabilities and seniors;
 - 2) reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to such developments while maintaining environmental and consumer protections;
 - 3) accommodate its fair share of the regional need for housing at all income levels; and
 - 4) ensure that its processes for enacting and implementing land use regulations are transparent and accessible for all members of the community, including renters, low income individuals, people of color, college students, and prospective residents, and individuals with language barriers;
- (5) Furthermore, given that existing land use regulation has worsened sprawl and traffic congestion, lawmakers should prioritize investing in alternative forms of transportation such as rapid bus transit, implement congestion pricing and paid parking to encourage alternative transportation, and ensure a healthy balance of jobs, population, and housing within each community. Finally, in light of high housing costs in Orange County, the Democratic Party of Orange County urges lawmakers at the federal, state and local levels to immediately increase the subsidies available for affordable housing, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Democratic Party of Orange County opposes the use of zoning and planning through ballot-box initiatives and referenda that prohibits and/or restricts the approval and/or funding of affordable and/or low income housing.

Submitted by Kenneth Stahl, ADEM 74 delegate

**Adopted by the Democratic Party of Orange County
At its February 26, 2018 Central Committee Meeting**