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### **Senators Ben Allen and Scott Wiener Propose Bill to Repeal Constitutional Roadblock to Affordable Housing**

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today, Senators Ben Allen (D - Santa Monica) and Scott Wiener (D- San Francisco) introduced legislation to repeal article 34 of the California Constitution, Mayor Eric Garcetti and the City of Los Angeles are sponsoring the legislation. Originally added in 1950, Article 34 requires cities to submit projects to a voter referendum when public funds are allocated to developing low-income rental housing. In the decades since its passage, cities have been forced to comply with a web of regulatory requirements and costly elections to build affordable housing.

“Voters have made their priorities clear. California must address its housing, affordability, and homelessness crises. And yet we have a decades old law that creates an unnecessary roadblock for cities who are trying to do right by their constituents. It’s time to repeal Article 34 and let cities do what they are intended to do; ensuring that there are safe, livable spaces for all,” said Senator Allen.

“Article 34 is a racist provision in the California Constitution - designed to keep people of color and poor people out of certain neighborhoods - and it needs to be repealed,” said Senator Wiener. “Publicly owned affordable housing for low income people is critical to reducing homelessness and ensuring that housing is available to people of all income levels. This important source of housing shouldn’t be singled out for voter approval when other types of housing aren’t.”

Basic compliance with Article 34 can cost affordable housing developers between \$10,000 and \$80,000, with overall compliance comprising 1% to 15% of the cost of building each unit. California housing agencies report that their attorneys spent a considerable amount of their time assisting cities and developers with Article 34 compliance.

“L.A. fought for--and won--billions of new affordable housing dollars in the last three years, but Article 34 inflicts unnecessary and costly burdens on cities, delaying the construction of housing in the communities we need it most. I am proud that we’re co-sponsoring a bill that will cut red tape, and help eliminate housing discrimination in our State’s Constitution,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti.

The California Department of Housing reports that the majority of Californian renters pay more than 30% of their income on rent and nearly one third of renters pay more than 50% of their income towards rent. Approximately 1 in 5 Californians live in poverty, with another 20% living near the poverty line. These poverty rates are attributed to a shortage of affordable housing, disproportionately affecting the state's lowest income residents.

If passed by the legislature, the repeal will be submitted to voters on the next statewide ballot.

*Ben Allen represents California's 26<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes the Westside, Hollywood and the South Bay communities of Los Angeles County.*