

## SB 9 (Atkins): California HOME (Housing Opportunity & More Efficiency) Act

### IN BRIEF

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Senate Bill 9 promotes small-scale neighborhood residential development by streamlining the process for a homeowner to create a duplex or subdivide an existing lot. Any new housing created as a result of this bill must meet a specific list of qualifications that ensure the protection of historic districts, environmental quality, and existing tenants vulnerable to displacement.

### THE ISSUE

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California will need an estimated 1.8 million new homes by 2025 in order to meet demand, yet on average only 80,000 new homes are built per year.<sup>1</sup>

California's continued housing shortage is a major source of stress on the state's economic recovery and fiscal health, as well as its social welfare, medical, and public safety systems. The severe mismatch between housing demand and available supply disproportionately impacts the state's lowest-income families – putting them at greater risk for housing instability and homelessness. COVID-19 has further exacerbated these issues.

The most effective way to address these issues is to provide more housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income families.

### THE SOLUTION

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SB 9 is an integral part of the Senate housing package, "Building Opportunities for All," which proposes a multifaceted approach to combatting California's housing crisis.

The bill establishes a statewide path for homeowners seeking to create a duplex or subdivide an existing residential parcel by ensuring local governments approve qualified applications without discretionary review, eliminating overly burdensome requirements that slows qualified applications.

This bill builds off the well-documented success of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which have expanded options for homeowners who wish to be part of the solution in solving the housing crisis. In just two years, ADUs grew to comprise one-fifth of all new housing stock in Los Angeles<sup>2</sup>.

At a time when many Californians are experiencing economic insecurity caused by the pandemic, this bill will generate affordable rental units. It also provides flexibility for multigenerational housing by allowing homeowners to build a modest unit on their property so that their aging parent or adult child can have an affordable place to live.

SB 9 expands opportunities for existing homeowners to build equity while also creating new homeownership opportunities for those locked out of the market.

Finally, SB 9 strikes an appropriate balance between respecting local control and creating the environment and opportunity for small-scale neighborhood development that benefits the broader community. Recent amendments clarify that up to four units are permitted on a single family parcel as a result of the lot split provisions of the bill. Additionally, SB 9 empowers local jurisdictions to enact an owner occupancy requirement.

This bill includes key safeguards to ensure:

- ✓ Local governments maintain control of zoning and design standards.
- ✓ Community character is respected.
- ✓ Tenants are protected.
- ✓ Historic neighborhoods are preserved.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<sup>1</sup>Housing and Community Development Dept. Statewide Housing Assessment 2025.

<sup>2</sup>Sightline Institute: LA ADUs: How A State Law Sent Granny Flats Off the Charts.