

April 5, 2024

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**THE HONORABLE JASMEET BAINS, CHAIR
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE**

Re: ASSEMBLY BILL 2207 (REYES) – CCoA Sponsor

Dear Chair Bains,

I am writing on behalf of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) in **enthusiastic support as the organizational sponsor of AB 2207 (Reyes)**, as introduced on February 7, 2024.

CCoA is established in Older Californians Act as an independent advisory body and principal advocate before the Governor, the Legislature, and state and federal agencies on behalf of California's older adults. Commission members represent the state's cultural and geographic diversity. Commissioners are consumers and providers of aging services, as well as researchers and academicians with decades of professional expertise within and outside the field of aging. CCoA is the trusted source for comprehensive knowledge and unbiased resources on policy issues impacting older adults.

AB 2207 would require the composition of seven advisory groups to include representation from a statewide state agency, program provider, or advocacy organization that serves or advocates on behalf of older adults:

- California Workforce Development Board
- Department of Health Care Access and Information's Workforce Education and Training Council
- Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
- Department of Health Care Services' Behavioral Health Planning Council
- Advisory Committee to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness
- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Advisory Committee

In California, task forces, councils, commissions, and work groups provide the foundation for systemic change, giving individuals who represent larger groups a voice in their government. When these advisory groups are working properly, they allow citizens to influence decisions that shape the quality of life for the residents of our state. Appointees are responsible for advising and reviewing policy and developing recommendations to address the issues facing the groups they represent.

While the current authority for making appointments does not exclude representation by individuals who represent the needs or perspectives of older adults, it fails to recognize these individuals as a requirement. The lack of involvement denies the reality and viewpoint of the older adult stakeholders, which may have conflicting



Karol Swartzlander, Executive Director
Gavin Newsom, Governor

goals. Additionally, the absence of the representation of the older adult stakeholder may result in system goals being prioritized over the goals of older adults.

California is changing, and it is aging. California's over-60 population is projected to diversify and grow faster than any other age group. By 2030, 10.8 million Californians will be older adults, making up one-quarter of the State's population.

AB 2207 will improve outcomes by including people whose needs and life experiences are different from the majority. This will help policymakers understand situations from other positions and to consider others' beliefs, experiences, and perspectives.

AB 2207 will ensure the interests of older adults, as reflected by state agencies, providers, and advocacy organizations that represent them, are "at the table." This bill seeks to promote equity and inclusion, recognizing that no policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy. To promote a "California for All," as prioritized in the Governor's Master Plan on Aging, the proposals and programs of the State must include the representation and participation of older adults in the decision-making process.

CCoA is pleased to be the sponsor of AB 2207 and asks for your support as the chair of the Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care.

If you have any questions, please contact Karol Swartzlander, CCoA Executive Director, at karol.swartzlander@ccoa.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryl Brown".

Cheryl Brown,
Chair, CA Commission on Aging