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**Executive Director**

Betsy Butler

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Scott Wiener  
State Capitol, Room 4066  
Sacramento, California 95814-4900

**Re: SB 239 (Wiener) – Support**

Dear Senator Wiener,

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), we are writing in support of SB 239, which would update California laws that criminalize and stigmatize people living with HIV by addressing HIV in the same manner as other serious communicable diseases, and by eliminating extra punishment for people living with HIV who engage in consensual sexual activity.

Enacted mainly in the 1980's and fueled by fear and ignorance about HIV and its transmission, these laws unfairly created unique restrictions and harsher punishments for people living with HIV. Societal and medical understanding of HIV and AIDS has greatly improved over the last three decades and California law should reflect the current landscape of HIV prevention, care and treatment.

CWLC recognizes that current criminal laws disproportionately impact women and people of color in California. Women living with HIV comprise only 13% of people living with HIV but make up 43% of those criminalized under California's HIV-specific criminal laws. And, while only about half of people living with HIV in California are Black or Latino, two thirds of people prosecuted under HIV-specific laws are Black or Latino.

CWLC's mission is to advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. Because HIV-specific laws fuel continued stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and the communities disproportionately impacted by HIV, CWLC strongly supports SB 239.

Sincerely,

Betsy Butler  
Executive Director