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Executive Director

Betsy Butler

March 28, 2017

Senator Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2031  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Reginald B. Jones-Sawyer, Sr.  
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for California Bail Reform Act of 2017 – AB 42 (Bonta) and SB 10 (Hertzberg)

Dear Senator Skinner and Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer:

On behalf of the California Women’s Law Center, we write in support of Assembly Bill 42 and Senate Bill 10 – the California Bail Reform Act of 2017 – which will ensure that Californians are not held in dangerous and overcrowded jails after an arrest simply because they cannot afford to post bail.

On any given day, 63% of those in jail in California are either awaiting trial or sentencing. Most cannot afford to post bail and are forced to either stay in jail, at great cost to taxpayers, or to pay exorbitant non-refundable fees to a bail bond company. People of color and families disproportionately suffer, and women are hit the hardest. Eighty-three percent of family members who take on court-related costs on behalf of loved ones are women.

Under the California Bail Reform Act, judges will have access to more information than they currently do about those coming before them in bail hearings, allowing them to make individual determinations based on the circumstances of each case, rather than ones based on wealth. This type of informed judicial decision-making will protect public safety while reducing the number of people kept in jail after their arrest, thereby lowering costs to taxpayers.

The California Women’s Law Center believes that reforming California’s bail system will promote gender and racial equity and reduce costs for all Californians. For these reasons, we strongly support the California Bail Reform Act of 2017, AB 42 and SB 10.

Sincerely,

Betsy Butler  
Executive Director