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June 14, 2021

The Honorable Mark Stone  
Chair, Assembly Committee on the Judiciary  
State Capitol, Room 5097  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Military and Veteran Affairs  
State Capitol, Room 389  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 498 (Umberg) – Support**

Dear Assemblymembers Stone and Irwin,

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center, we write in support of SB 498 which will expand eligibility for free legal services in California.

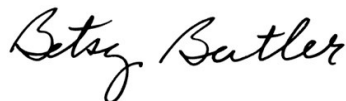
Currently, an individual must be at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to qualify for free legal help through the State Bar's Interest on Lawyer Trust Account (IOLTA) funding. Eligibility for this funding requires that individuals make less than \$16,000 in yearly income and a family of four cannot make more than \$33,125 annually. The FPL does not adequately reflect the needs of Californians living in poverty because many people who need assistance are deemed ineligible due to the amazingly low and strict income limits.

SB 498 will raise the income eligibility for Californians to qualify for IOLTA funded legal services from 125% to 200% of the FPL. SB 498 will also specifically exclude veteran disability compensation from the calculation of qualifying income, so more veterans will be able to access legal services.

CWLC's mission is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. SB 498 will expand eligibility for free legal services allowing more Californians to access the assistance they need.

For these reasons, the California Women's Law Center supports SB 498.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler  
Executive Director