



May 2, 2017

State Senator Robert Hertzberg
State Capitol, Room 4038
Sacramento, California 95814

Assemblymember Rob Bonta
State Capitol, Room 2148
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: SUPPORT for California Money Bail Reform Act of 2017 – AB 42 (Bonta) and SB 10 (Hertzberg)

Dear Senator Hertzberg and Assemblymember Bonta:

On behalf of the Hollywood Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), I write in support of AB 42 (Bonta) and SB 10 (Hertzberg) – the California Money Bail Reform Act of 2017 – which will ensure that people are not held in dangerous, overcrowded jails after an arrest *simply because they cannot afford to post bail*. The effect of the Act will be to ensure that people return to court as required and that the public is protected, while ending the current bail system's cruel discrimination against low-income Californians and people of color.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, about 63% of people in jail in California on any given day (or 46,000 people) are either awaiting trial or sentencing – at a high financial and social cost to taxpayers.

California's current bail system is punishing whole families and communities. Most Californians cannot afford to post bail and so must either stay in jail or pay substantial nonrefundable fees to a bail bond company. These fees are not refunded under any circumstances – even if the court finds that a person is innocent or was wrongfully arrested. Over-policing of communities of color results in more arrests, exacting a disproportionate price from these communities. Whole families suffer, as they take on long-term debt to purchase the safety and freedom of a loved one, and women are hit the hardest. According to an Ella Baker Center survey, 83% of family members who take on court-related costs on behalf of loved ones are women.

Successful models for reform can be found in California and other states. Like with these systems, under the California Money Bail Reform Act, judges will have access to more information than they do now about people coming before them so they can determine, based on the circumstances of the individual case rather than a person's wealth, who can return home and under what conditions while their case is being resolved. More informed decision-making protects public safety while reducing the number of people kept in jail after arrest, at a cost to the liberty of low-income Californians and to taxpayers.



It is time for California to implement these proven and cost-effective systems across the state. For these reasons, we thank you for your leadership in introducing the California Money Bail Reform Act of 2017 and support your efforts to advance this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

John Erickson
President
Hollywood NOW

cc: Senator Robert Hertzberg c/o diane.griffiths@sen.ca.gov
Assemblymember Rob Bonta c/o evan.corder@asm.ca.gov
Emily Harris, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights emily@ellabakercenter.org