



March 5, 2019

The Honorable Ash Kalra
State Capitol, Room 2196
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 50 (Kalra) Medi-Cal: Assisted Living Waiver program – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Kalra:

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA), a coalition of over 275 organizations representing one million Californians, strongly supports AB 50 (Kalra). AB 50 would renew the Medi-Cal Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) for five years, and it would expand the current program cap on participants to 18,500 and provide greater statewide availability by expanding the number of participating counties on a regional basis, including many seniors.

The current ALW program is one of California's responses to the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on *Olmstead v L.C.*, requiring states to eliminate unnecessary segregation of persons with disabilities and ensure receipt of services in the most integrated setting to meet their needs, as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The current ALW program limits the number of participants even though the current need is multiples more and continues to grow as the number of older Californians increase. Furthermore, the program is restricted to 15 counties when the need is in all counties.

Thousands of Medi-Cal recipients, who currently reside in more restrictive care settings such as Residential Care Facilities, are ideal candidates for the ALW program. This bill would save the state and federal government a significant amount of money by alternatively serving these recipients in the ALW program. The expansion of the ALW program is critical to the quality of life of thousands of persons with disabilities by enabling them to live and receive services in an integrated, home and community-based setting, rather than in a segregated, significantly more expensive Residential Care Facility.

For these reasons, CARA supports AB 50. We look forward to working with you on its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hene Kelly".

Hene Kelly
CARA Legislative Director
415-533-5244