



March 8, 2019

The Honorable Richard Pan
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 512 (Pan) Long-term services and supports – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Pan,

I am writing to you on behalf of the California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) to support SB 512 that would create a new long-term services and support (LTSS) benefit program for California residents. CARA is California's largest grassroots senior advocacy organization, representing 1 million seniors through our 275 affiliated organizations. We work on issues to improve the quality of life for seniors, people with disabilities, and our families, and to promote policies that encourage and allow people to age in place with dignity and independence. SB 512 would provide much needed long-term supports and services to help accomplish this goal.

California currently has almost 8 million persons who are either older adults or persons with mobility, intellectual/developmental, and/or mental health disabilities. This population will grow significantly over the next decade. LTSS are not covered adequately by Medicare, and most Californians cannot afford to purchase private long-term care insurance. Paying out-of-pocket for LTSS is cost prohibitive for many and creates a significant financial and social burden for California families. For individuals and families, the unanticipated costs can lead to impoverishment, lack of care options, and intense psychological stress. When informal networks of care are not available, individuals and families pay out-of-pocket for LTSS, purchasing services provided by home care aides, adult day services, assisted living communities, and nursing homes, to help fill the gap. But these services bring high costs, not only to the individuals directly involved, but also to taxpayers and the government as more individuals are forced to spend down assets to qualify for an overburdened Medi-Cal system.

CARA believes that California needs a new LTSS financing program that provides flexible benefits responsive to each person's unique needs. This program would preserve dignity, choice, and intentionality for individuals and families with service and support needs, and be linked to a new, sustainable funding source. This social insurance program would help relieve the increasing demographic and financial pressure on our Medi-Cal system. For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 512.

Sincerely,

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

Hene Kelly,
Legislative Director
415-533-5244

Cc: Assemblymember Ash Kalra