



May 21, 2020

The Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SB 1257 (Durazo) Health & Safety for All Workers Act – Support

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) to support SB 1257. CARA, California's largest grassroots senior advocacy organization, will communicate our support to over 1,000,000 represented seniors and their families through our 275 affiliated organizations. SB 1257, currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee, removes the exclusion of household domestic service where all other workers are protected regarding workplace health and safety.

CARA believes the legislature must take affirmative steps to protect over 300,000 domestic workers, working as housekeepers, nannies, and caregivers in private homes in California. This bill, a basic step, would bring those workers under the scrutiny of California's Occupational Health and Safety agency, Cal/OSHA. Two (2) million households rely on domestic workers. But, those domestic workers are too easily exploited, underappreciated, and vulnerable.

California has experienced recent disasters, including wildfires and our current COVID 19 crisis. No worker should be exploited in such conditions. Yet, we already have many examples of that happening. For example, how can it be appropriate for household workers to be instructed by homeowners who fled the fire to remain behind as firefighters? Now, COVID 19 pushes the boundaries on domestic workers in more outrageous ways. The 2011 Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 163 expressed intent to have industry-specific protections and labor standards for these workers. Now is the time to enact legislation to move that agenda.

SB 1257 requires that we create appropriate standards: no groups should be left vulnerable to worker exploitation. Health and safety standards form a foundation to protect workers. Of course, we also recognize that this requires the legislature to appropriately fund and staff Cal/OSHA. Our affiliate organizations all believe active efforts to protect health and safety build a better state, and domestic workers must be included.

For these reasons, CARA supports SB 1257, the Health & Safety for All Workers Act and urges an AYE vote when it comes before your committee.

Sincerely,

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

Hene Kelly
Legislative Director
415-533-5244

Cc: Senator Maria Elena Durazo