



The Honorable John Laird
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: SB 258 (Laird) Support

March 1, 2021

Dear Senator Laird,

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) writes in strong support of Senate Bill 258 would add HIV status to the definition of senior of greatest social need for the California Department of Aging to make priority determinations for services and funds. CARA is California's largest grassroots advocacy organization, representing over 1 million members through our 300+ affiliated organizations.

Existing law, the Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act, establishes the California Department of Aging and sets forth its mission to provide leadership to the area agencies on aging in developing systems of home and community-based services that maintain individuals in their own homes or least restrictive homelike environments. Existing law requires the department, in allocating specified state and federal funding to area agencies on aging, to ensure that priority consideration is given to criteria that reflect the state's intent to target services to those in greatest economic or social need. Existing law defines "greatest social need" to mean the need caused by noneconomic factors, including physical and mental disabilities, that restrict an individual's ability to perform normal daily tasks or that threaten the individual's capacity to live independently.

SB 258 would add HIV to this list. CARA believes that this addition is way overdue. Many seniors have lived with HIV for a long time, as well as those more recently infected. SB 258 would revise this definition to include human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status as a specified noneconomic factor.

For all these reasons, CARA urges support of SB 258. CARA thanks you for authoring this important legislation and looks forward to working with you on its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hene Kelly".

Hene Kelly
CARA Legislative Director
415-533-5244