February 24th, 2022

The Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer  
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee  
1020 N Street Room 111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

CC: The Honorable Phil Ting

RE: AB 1947 (Ting) Freedom from Hate Crimes Act _ SUPPORT

Chair Jones-Sawyer,

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA), one of the state’s foremost grassroots senior and disability advocacy organizations, representing over 1 million Californians, is proud to co-sponsor AB 1947 (Ting), which seeks to establish additional guidelines and specific policies for law enforcement agencies to properly identify, respond to, and report hate crimes.

The pandemic has served as a catalyst: expediting transformative innovation to revolutionize public service (distance learning, telehealth, etc.) while also exacerbating disparities across the intersectional spectrum. As our nation and state have struggled to combat rising hate crimes since 2015, the pandemic, coupled with the hyper polarization of xenophobic and racist policies espoused by the previous federal administration, have fueled, in part, the massive rise of hate crimes against seniors, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA individuals and communities, especially our AAPI family. As a grassroots senior and disability advocacy organization, our members have firsthand experience with incidents of hate, and what is more disconcerting is the dramatic underreporting of such incidents - as stated by the California State Auditor.

With the rise of extremist activity over the last six years now surging through the pandemic by disproportionately targeting our senior, AAPI, BIPOC, Jewish and LGBTQIA communities - California is in dire need of immediate action. AB 1947 will equip our law enforcement agencies with the tools and training to be more effective identifying, responding to, and reporting hate crimes. Additionally, the Department of Justice will be tasked with ensuring each law enforcement agencies’ hate crime policies, brochures and training schedules remain in compliance with this new law.

Affording Seniors viable resources to age with grace, dignity and independence - such as protecting our personal safety and reducing the likelihood of hate crimes - not only represent CARA’s foundational principles but we believe will ensure a safer, more accessible and inclusive California for our aging community; AB 1947
(Ting) codifies these aspirations into law by enhancing the safety of our Seniors, AAPI, LGBTQIA, and BIPOC communities.

CARA respectfully urges your AYE vote on AB 1947 (Ting).

Sincerely,

Hene Kelly
Chair, Legislative Committee
California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)

Keith Umemoto
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)