March 13th, 2023

The Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer
Chair, Assembly Public Safety
1021 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 751 – SPONSOR

Dear 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 sponsor AB 751 (Schiavo), which seeks to codify existing law (SB 338 Hueso, 2019), the Senior Disability and Justice Act, which requires law enforcement agencies to update existing trainings and policies to better protect seniors from violent crimes.

Older adults are among those most at risk for crime victimization, including sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, hate crimes motivated by bias against people with disabilities including disabilities caused by aging, and homicide. The obstacles to justice include a lack of reporting of these crimes to law enforcement agencies and the agencies’ frequently inadequate response to the reports they do receive. “Increase prevention of elder abuse – both physical and financial” was the highest-ranked goal that California voters selected for the Master Plan for Aging in a 2019 survey.

Children and adults with disabilities are victimized by violent crime 3.5 times the rate of the general population. For those with cognitive disabilities (dementia, intellectual disabilities, and mental illness), the rate is more than 5.5 times higher. A 2012 survey of abuse victims with disabilities found that 52.8% of those who reported the abuse to police said that “nothing happened.” Just 7.8% said a suspect was arrested.

SB 338 (Hueso) of 2019 spelled out a comprehensive policy for local law enforcement agencies training and guiding officers to handle these crimes. In 2022, California Legislative Counsel determined that later legislation made this policy mandatory on all agencies. AB 751 codifies that finding.

Affording Seniors viable resources to age with grace, dignity and independence - such as protecting our personal safety and reducing the likelihood of violent crimes - not only represent CARA’s foundational principles but we believe will ensure a safer, more accessible and inclusive California for our aging community;

CARA/ 1675 7th St. PO Box 23754/ Oakland, CA 94623/ 510-662-4086/ www.californiaalliance.org
AB 751 (Schiavo) codifies these aspirations into law by enhancing the safety of our Seniors, children, marginalized communities and all Californians.

We humbly ask that you vote YES on AB 751.

Sincerely,

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

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