April 5th, 2023

The Honorable Ash Kalra
Chair, Assembly Labor and Employment Committee
1020 N Street, Room 155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 524 (Wicks) Family Caregiver Discrimination – Support

Dear Chair Kalra,

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 support AB 524 (Wicks), which will prohibit discrimination against employees based on their status as a family caregiver.

Employment actions—like termination, refusal to hire, or demotion—may be based on biases about how workers who are caregivers will or should act, without regard to the workers’ actual performances or preferences. Mothers and fathers of young children, pregnant and breastfeeding people, and employees with aging parents or sick spouses or partners may encounter caregiver discrimination.

AB 524 would prohibit employers from discriminating against employees based on their status as a caregiver by adding "family caregiver status" to the list of protected characteristics (e.g., race, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, etc.) that are already prohibited bases of discrimination under the employment provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act. This legislation helps both the people and the State.

As an organization comprised of older adults and seniors representing various communities, cultures, and ethnicities, many of our members have served their families as the primary caregiver while working one or multiple jobs throughout their careers. Unfortunately, we know firsthand how challenging it can be to find or retain work while also serving as the primary caregiver and how barriers to employment are exacerbated for women, immigrants, and people of color - especially as a caregiver. It is vital that the Legislature enacts laws that abolish discrimination in all forms, in all hiring practices, to ensure all Californians are afforded equal and equitable opportunities to obtain employment.

Affording Californians viable resources to age with grace, dignity and independence - by eliminating discriminatory hiring practices against family caregivers- not only represent CARA’s foundational principles but we believe will ensure a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive California for all communities.

We respectfully urge your AYE vote on AB 524.

CARA/ 1675 7th St. PO Box 23754/ Oakland, CA 94623/ 510-662-4086/ www.californiaalliance.org
Sincerely,

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

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