



April 13, 2017

Assemblymember Reginald B. Jones-Sawyer
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
Sacramento, California 95814
VIA EMAIL

Re: SUPPORT for California Bail Reform Act of 2017 – AB 42 (Bonta) and SB 10 (Hertzberg)

Dear Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer:

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Los Angeles County Council (NAMI LACC), I write to support AB 42 (Bonta) and SB 10 (Hertzberg) to ensure that people are not held in jail after arrest only because they cannot afford to post bail.

Money bail disproportionately affects those living with mental illness and keeps them in jail longer than need be, forcing them to rely on mental health care in a jail setting. Yet, research demonstrates that having a mental health condition *does not* increase the risk of failure to appear or rearrest during pretrial release. With bail reform in place, our loved ones may be released from incarceration much sooner, which could result in better individual outcomes for them.

NAMI LACC seeks to reduce or eliminate jail stays for our loved ones and increase their options for and access to treatment. We provide our support on the understanding that people with mental illness will receive effective linkage to available services and housing pretrial and that they will not be forced to stay in jail to obtain treatment or be released onto the streets without care.

These bills could be an important, additional element in Los Angeles' broader commitment to divert people with mental illness from the criminal justice system to the mental health system provided there is capacity to serve those who are released pretrial. There is no doubt that money bail is a barrier to diverting individuals with mental illness lacking financial resources from unnecessary incarceration into treatment.

We urge your support.

Sincerely yours,

Brittney Weissman, Executive Director

CC: Senator Robert Hertzberg c/o diane.griffiths@sen.ca.gov
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