



June 18, 2020

Honorable Jerry Hill, Chair
Senator Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA. 95814

ACA 5 (Weber) Support California Act for Economic Prosperity

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CCSWG) strongly supports ACA 5, which creates equal opportunities for all Californians by restoring the consideration of race and gender in public contracting, public employment and public education.

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls strives to be an integral voice in California for women and girls, many of whom are negatively affected by systemic injustices that often perpetuate discrimination, marginalization and, all too often, negate the rights of Black and Brown women and girls of safety, peace, and equity of opportunity. By reauthorizing traditional efforts to promote equal opportunity and to build pipelines of support for marginalized communities, ACA 5 is an effort we are proud to stand behind.

The Commission has voted unanimously to support this legislation and is committed to taking a stronger stance in supporting and uplifting Black women and girls and women and girls of color. CCSWG stands with those who are raising their voices to demand that California do better when it comes to dismantling racism. We believe this opportunity to restore programming that will reduce disparities in education, graduation rates, wages and contracting is one piece of that process.

California must rebuild stronger than ever after the devastating effects of COVID-19. The CCSWG is committed to creating a more equitable California through that process. While we are the fifth largest economy in the world, too many of our citizens do not share in the state's prosperity due to discrimination in contracts and hiring. Businesses owned by women and people of color lose \$1.1 billion annually in government contracts and women of color and single mothers earn less than 60 cents on the dollar for the same work as their White male counterparts.

ACA 5 will provide the resources required to support diverse small businesses and get women and specifically BIPOC workers who are hardest hit by the pandemic back into the workforce with better jobs and higher wages. It restores the ability to provide more opportunities for women, and especially Black and Brown women, to succeed by encouraging employers to eliminate discrimination, creating fair hiring practices and contract awards, and expanding access to higher education for students of color.



California's ban on affirmative action after the enactment of Proposition 209 in 1996 created a huge hurdle in state leader's ability to actively take measures to address the root causes of some of these inequities. African American and Latino students admitted to the University of California decreased between 12 and 60 percent depending on the campus. A striking shortage of physicians of color has been exacerbated since the ban on equal opportunity programs in state-run medical schools.

Nearly twenty-five years later, Proposition 209 has hurt, and not helped, Californians by prohibiting time-tested affirmative action programs that bolster education and job opportunities for women and people from Black and Brown communities. We are a majority-minority state, yet one of only eight states that has an equal opportunity ban in place.

Passing ACA 5 is critical to building a stronger California reflective of our state's diverse composition and its values. We strongly support the passage of this important measure to restore equal access to opportunity for all Californians.

On behalf of the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls,

LaKenya Jordan, Executive Director

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