

October 2, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 54 (de León)—Request Signature

Dear Governor Brown:

The League of Women Voters of California is pleased to support SB 54, the California Values Act, which would limit state and local law enforcement agencies' involvement in immigration enforcement and ensure that eligible individuals are able to seek services from and engage with government agencies without regard to their immigration status. Recent amendments take steps to address the concerns expressed by law enforcement agencies, as well as ensure that sufficient time is allotted for these policies to be developed and implemented.

The League of Women Voters supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity. The League believes that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination. The League also believes in protecting families, and in supporting their unification throughout the immigration process.

SB 54 would protect California residents from an anticipated mass deportation policy under the new Administration in Washington without threatening the safety of our communities. State and local resources and personnel would not be used for immigration enforcement purposes, minus specific and reasonable exceptions. Corrections and parole officers would notify immigration authorities at least 60 days prior to the release of a violent felon. Individuals with prior convictions for violent felonies who are subject to removal for an aggravated felony would still be transferred to immigration authorities by local peace officers. For other individuals, requiring a judicial warrant or judicial probable cause determination prior to coordinating with federal authorities will ensure a minimum level of due process while retaining the ability to remove those who are evident threats to our communities.

Currently, undocumented residents are afraid to use community resources such as our schools, churches, courts, shelters, and health systems for fear of deportation. This bill, and the model policies to be published by the Attorney General, would reassure unauthorized Californians that their participation in community agencies would not result in their deportation. Even some legal residents are afraid of law enforcement as they fear even minimal contact may open the door to searches of their friends, family members, and other community members.

SB 54 is part of a series of bills which would block California's participation in mass deportation and has been amended to reflect input from stakeholders on both sides of the issue. Supporting families is a California value; tearing them apart is not. We urge you to uphold these values and sign this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen L. Hutchison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

Helen L. Hutchison
President

cc: Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León