Assemblymember Alex Lee
PO Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 1509 (Lee)

Dear Asm. Lee,

On behalf of [Org name], we are proud to support AB 1509 (Lee), known as the Ant-Racism Sentencing Reform Act. The Anti-Racism Sentencing Reform Act will eliminate most gun enhancements and reduce the time associated with other gun enhancements to 1/2/3 years and open a pathway for resentencing for those serving time with relevant gun enhancements.

Gun enhancements are the most commonly used enhancements that add extra years to a sentence. For example, if someone uses a gun during the commission of a robbery they could be charged for the offense which has a statutory range from 5 to 9 years, as well as additional time for the use of a gun, which could range anywhere from 10 years to a life term. The gun enhancement is then served consecutively, not concurrently, so a person may end up serving as much as five times as long as the underlying offense in enhancement time. The latest available data shows that 37,237 people in CDCR custody had some form of gun enhancement as part of their sentence. More than 89% of these individuals were people of color.

Sentence enhancements are costly, ineffective, and contribute heavily to systemic racism in the criminal legal system. There are more than 150 sentence enhancements on the books across California’s Penal Code, however, there is no compelling evidence that their usage improves public safety. In fact, the opposite may be true. While initial incarceration prevents crime through incapacitation, studies show that each additional sentence year causes a 4 to 7 percent increase in recidivism that eventually outweighs the incapacitation benefit. Each year of incarceration costs the state approximately $81,000 per incarcerated person, with lifetime incarceration costing the state upwards of $5 million per individual.

Not only do enhancements not serve public safety goals, they also serve no meaningful deterrence purpose. Research on extreme sentence lengths offers little to no support for the idea

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3. https://lao.ca.gov/PolicyAreas/CJ/6_cj_inmatecost
that the threat of longer sentences deters people from committing crimes\(^4\). What research has consistently found is that people age out of crime\(^5\), so that by the time the state has sentenced someone to an extremely long sentence, they have reached an age where they no longer pose a threat to public safety.

For these reasons, [ORG] is proud to support AB 1509 (Lee).

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Job title / org]

CC:
Aubrey Rodriguez, Office of Assemblymember Alex Lee ([Aubrey.Rodriguez@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Aubrey.Rodriguez@asm.ca.gov))
Phil Melendez, Re:Store Justice ([philip@restorecal.org](mailto:philip@restorecal.org))

Assembly Public Safety Committee Members

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