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May 30, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2455 (Gabriel) – Whistleblower protection: state and local government procedures.
As Amended April 4, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee – June 11, 2024**

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2455 by Assembly Member Gabriel. This measure would modernize the Whistleblower Protection Act and will help local agencies prevent the misuse of government resources by extending its protections to activities related to government contractors, among other changes.

Local government agencies increasingly depend on private contractors to aid in delivering services to their communities. To ensure the Whistleblower Protection Act can fulfill its mission to prevent the waste of government resources, it is crucial to safeguard whistleblowers, not only when exposing misconduct within government operations, but also for the companies they enlist as contractors.

In 2002, the California legislature passed the Whistleblower Protection Act to protect employees who report unlawful activities. This legislation inspired local governments to implement whistleblower hotlines that provide a location to file reports that disclose fraudulent and wasteful activity, in hopes of saving taxpayers money and making government operations more efficient. AB 2455 modernizes the law by providing clarity to ensure that whistleblowers know their activity is protected not just when reporting improper governmental activities by phone, but also when submitting complaints via online portals or email.

Finally, the bill improves governmental efficiency by allowing the designees of county auditors, controllers, and auditor-controllers to review and investigate whistleblower complaints.

As counties increasingly rely on private contractors, AB 2455 would modernize the current whistleblower laws to help protect local resources and improve accountability for governments and their contractors alike.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2455 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at elawyer@counties.org.

The Honorable Thomas Umberg

May 30, 2024

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Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus