

June 5, 2017

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 31 (Lara) Fight for California Religious Freedom as Amended 3/27/17 –
SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Lara,

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto writes in strong support of SB 31 (Lara), the California Religious Freedom Act, which protects the safe and free exercise of religion by all Californians by ensuring that state and local agencies and personnel do not participate in, or use agency resources to create, a registry, list, or database of individuals based on religious beliefs, practices, or affiliations, national origin, or ethnicity. SB 31 also prohibits state and local law enforcement from collecting information about an individual's religious beliefs or affiliations, with limited exceptions for providing religious accommodations or as part of a targeted criminal investigation.

SB 31 is consistent with the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Section 4 of Article I of the California Constitution, which guarantee the free exercise and enjoyment of religion without discrimination. California has a rich and robust cultural heritage that has resulted in significant ethnic and religious diversity of its residents. Freedom of religion and protection from religious discrimination are some of the founding ideals of our nation.

On the campaign trail, President Trump repeatedly expressed interest in creating a Muslim registry. Even though the Obama Administration took recent action to rescind the post-9/11 National Security Exit-Entry Registration System (NSEERS) which collected information on primarily Muslim men in the U.S., the Trump Administration could swiftly reinstate a similar or more draconian program. SB 31 provides robust state action to protect vulnerable communities from ineffective and harmful programs that undermine public safety and diminish public trust in law enforcement, while also fulfilling California's duty to ensure equal treatment under the law, regardless of race, religion, or national origin.

For these reasons, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto is pleased to strongly support SB 31. Thank you for your leadership on this matter.

Sincerely,

Sally Ahnger, President, UU CPA Board of Trustees