



MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA
CITY OF LONG BEACH

February 10, 2017

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

Re: Support for SB 31 (Lara) – The California Religious Freedom Act

Dear Senator Lara:

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I write in strong support of SB 31 (Lara), the California Religious Freedom Act. On February 7, 2017, the Long Beach City Council voted to approve a motion in support of this legislation. SB 31 would prohibit the State and local law enforcement agencies from ever providing, disclosing, or supporting financially, with personnel or equipment, the collection of personally identifiable information pertaining to the religious beliefs, practices, or afflictions of any individual for the purpose of compiling a registry or database.

As a vibrant, multi-cultural city, Long Beach thrives on the ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and diversity of our immigrant communities and American-born residents. This diversity also includes diversity of religion. While the City does not have official statistics on the types of religious institutions in Long Beach, it is evident that numerous places of worship exist peacefully throughout the City to serve a number of different religions; this is part of what makes Long Beach great.

California must uphold the protection of religious freedom for all of its people, and the State has a moral obligation to protect its citizens from religious persecution. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution, guaranteeing the free exercise and enjoyment of religion without discrimination, is a crucial part of who we are as Americans. Long Beach values, tremendously, the respect we have for one another's religion.

Given these reasons, the City of Long Beach is proud to join over 195 organizations from throughout California, in support of SB 31 (Lara). Thank you for introducing this legislation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Robert Garcia
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Speaker Anthony Rendon, State Assembly
The Honorable Janet Nguyen, State Senate, 34th District
The Honorable Steven Bradford, State Senate, 35th District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 64th District
The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, State Assembly, 70th District