



April 22, 2019

Honorable Jim Wood  
Chair, Assembly Health Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for AB 50**

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

The California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports is comprised of 38 statewide aging and disability organizations that promote dignity and independence in long-term living. Our members include advocates, providers, labor, and health insurers and collectively we represent millions of California seniors and people with disabilities, their caregivers, and those who provide health, human services, and housing.

We are writing in support of AB 50 (Kalra), which would direct the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to significantly increase the available participant slots in the Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) and expand the availability of the ALW beyond the current 15 counties. The ALW program gives the state the flexibility to provide a range of services, including traditional medical services and non-medical services. The waiver serves older adults and adults with disabilities who meet nursing home Medicaid coverage requirements, but prefer to reside in a community-based setting.

Not only is having increased access to the ALW better for the beneficiaries, but it also saves the State of California money, as the cost of Assisted Living is significantly lower than unnecessary stays in a nursing home or hospital.

Additionally, the availability of Assisted Living will provide access to beneficiaries that would otherwise go into a nursing home or stay in a hospital for longer than necessary, and so the State will also realize cost savings from these diversions while providing more appropriate care for the Medi-Cal population.

Demand for the ALW program has outgrown availability, leaving over 4,000 Californians across fifteen counties on a waitlist with many more beneficiaries potentially eligible for this program. It is imperative that California recognize that there is a need for increased access to Assisted Living as an alternative to stays in institutional settings. A critical step forward in providing an alternative to institutionalization, AB 50 seeks to expand the ALW program to meet the demand of California's growing aging population and ensure access to community services.

We strongly urge you and your committee to support AB 50 and demonstrate a commitment to enacting legislation that will address the needs of California's aging and disability population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber C. Christ". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amber" being the most prominent part.

Amber C. Christ, JD, *Vice Chair for Policy*  
California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports  
Directing Attorney, Justice in Aging