



The Honorable Ricardo Lara
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4933

SB 31 (Lara): California Religious Freedom Act
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lara:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing the 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of all four California AAP regional chapters statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 31 (Lara). This bill would prohibit state and local agencies, as well as public employees acting under color of law, from providing or disclosing personally identifiable information regarding a person’s religious beliefs or practices if sought for compiling an immigration or law enforcement database relating to people’s religion, national origin, or ethnicity. It would also prohibit state and local law enforcement agencies from collaborating or participating in the creation of such a database, and from collecting such information except as part of a targeted investigation or to provide religious accommodations.

Children might not know the word, but they know what prejudice feels like. Even young children recognize the signals sent by others that say they are somehow less than. Pervasive prejudice is a primary source of toxic stress: a form of chronic, debilitating stress that has lifelong implications for a child’s physical and mental health. Any federal program that would seek to profile children and their families by religion—threatening them with surveillance, criminal prosecution, or forced relocation or deportation—would be immensely damaging to the health and well-being of California children.

Unfortunately, the enactment of such a program has never seemed more likely. As AAP President Dr. Fernando Stein said in an official statement regarding the executive orders of January 25: “Far too many children in this country already live in constant fear that their parents will be taken into custody or deported, and the message these children received today from the highest levels of our federal government exacerbates that fear and anxiety. No child should ever live in fear.”

SB 31 would help to assure that state and local security agencies are able to remain dedicated solely to safeguarding the safety of their communities—thus allowing children across California to live their lives more fully and less fearfully, knowing that our state values their presence and will act to protect them.

California pediatricians strongly support SB 31 (Lara). We thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

Kris Calvin

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin" with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the end.

Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne