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April 19, 2021

The Honorable Luz Rivas
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 46 (Luz Rivas) California Youth Empowerment Act.
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Rivas,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 46 as amended on April 15, 2021, which would create the California Youth Empowerment Act and establish the California Youth Empowerment Commission.

You must be 18 years of age to vote in California, yet many of the decisions made by elected officials substantially impact those under that age. In other words, California youth under 18 are impacted by choices in which they have no say or sway. Homeless youth and youth in the juvenile justice system have even fewer opportunities to contribute to the policy process. Youth empowerment programs find ways to actively involve youth in these decisions and the policy process.

Youth empowerment programs have been shown to improve social skills, behavior, academic achievement, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. These programs open pathways of communication and provide opportunities for civic engagement leading to improved programs while creating opportunities for youth to acquire civic knowledge and develop the skills necessary to advocate for themselves and others.

AB 46 would create a commission dedicated to providing meaningful opportunities for civic engagement to improve the quality of life for California's disconnected and disadvantaged youth.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 46. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zarah Iqbal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "Z" and "I".

Zarah Iqbal, M.D. FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership