**Please send a support letter – On your letter head**

**Sample Support Letter – Senate Bill 222 (Hernandez)**

**Send Email To:** bao.nguyen@Sen.Ca.Gov or by fax (916) 266-9350

**Send Copy To:** john@safeandjust.org**;** aelayyat@cwda.org; joe.parra@Sen.CA.Gov; tim.conaghan@Sen.Ca.Gov

**Date \_\_\_\_Please Submit by March 7**

The Honorable Ed Hernandez

Chair, Senate Health Committee

Room 2080, State Capitol

Sacramento, CA  95814

**RE: Support SB 222 (Hernandez) – Medi-Cal Inmate Suspension**

Dear Senator Hernandez:

[**Name of Your Organization**] supports your Senate Bill 222, which requires county human services agencies to suspend Medi-Cal eligibility for incarcerated individuals for an indefinite timeframe, rather than terminating benefits after one year per the current one year limitation in statute.

Current law requires counties to suspend Medi-Cal eligibility for individuals who become incarcerated for up to one year from the date of incarceration, or upon release, whichever comes sooner. This current one year limitation, which was enacted in 2013 and is not based on any federal limitation, makes it more difficult for individuals who are incarcerated for longer periods of time to obtain Medi-Cal benefits prior to their release from jail or prison. Individuals who become incarcerated and have their Medi-Cal benefits suspended, then subsequently terminated based on the one year limit, are required to re-apply for benefits in order to restore their Medi-Cal eligibility. Per federal guidance, this one year time limit is not mandated and states are directed to leave individuals in a suspension status until they are no longer eligible for benefits, or upon release, whichever occurs first.

Indefinitely suspending Medi-Cal benefits, as SB 222 would do, ensures that incarcerated individuals have immediate access to benefits that are essential for their basic needs upon release, rather than requiring them to re-apply for benefits and potentially not have access to care immediately. Typically, incarcerated individuals have physical and mental health issues that must be addressed, and ensuring access to health care upon release gives them the opportunity to seek the care they need immediately.

Indefinite benefit suspension streamlines access to coverage and greatly reduces the risks of recidivism as individuals are able to get the critical care that they need. This provides continuity in mental health care, physical treatment and prescription medication between the period of incarceration and reintegration into their community. Ensuring all incarcerated persons return home without gaps in health care improves community safety, protects public health and reduces the likelihood of recidivism by ensuring people with medical care needs have immediate access to critical health supports they need.

For these reasons, [**Name of Your Organization**] supports SB 222 and respectfully requests your “Aye” vote.

Sincerely,

**Your Name and Title**

CC: John Bauters, Californians for Safety and Justice (Sponsor)

Frank Mecca, County Welfare Directors Association of California (Sponsor)