

BOARD OFFICERS

Luz Reyes-Martin
President
Andria Martinez Cohen
VP Policy
Amanda Hsiung
VP Organization
Kate Parker
Secretary
Catherine Swysen
CFO



33 Years of Feminism From Marching in the Streets to a Seat at the Table

BOARD MEMBERS

Vicki Allen
ej Borah
Anna Everett
Pamela Flynt Tambo
Elsa Granados
Charlotte Gullap-Moore
Lisa Guravitz
Alejandra Gutierrez
Hathor Hammett
Wendy Jackson
Karena Jew
Teri Jory
Sandy Kievman
Stacy Little
Paula Lopez
Meredith Murr
Christina Pizarro
Jennifer Smith
Catherine Swysen

PAST PRESIDENTS

Gayle Binion
Barbara Lindemann
Lois Phillips
Carole Piceno
Susan Rose
Hannah-Beth Jackson
Margaret Connell
Helene Schneider
Janet Barron
Alissa Hummer
Sharon Hoshida
Lisa Guravitz
Mary O'Gorman
Beth Schneider
Jane Gray
Carol Keator
Catherine Swysen

June 15, 2021

Assemblymember Reginald Jones-Sawyer
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95818
Email, Legislative Director Michael.Lucien@asm.ca.gov

Re: SB 357 (Wiener) Safer Streets for All -- Support

Dear Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer:

The Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC) is writing in support of SB 357 by Senator Scott Wiener, to repeal California Penal Code § 653.22, which criminalizes "loitering for the purposes of committing prostitution." With approximately 300 members, we are one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County. As part of our mission to further feminist values through political and social action we advocate for a diverse set of positions, including the demand for legislation that addresses Women in the Workplace and Anti-Racism, including "...mandatory safety standards to ensure safe and secure working conditions for all, including historically unrepresented, marginalized and easily exploited workers such as caregivers and sex workers.

<https://sbwpc.org/positions>.

The broad subjective nature of the anti-loitering law has created opportunities for law enforcement to engage in discriminatory policing that targets Black and Brown women and members of the transgender community. Black adults accounted for 56.1% of the § 653.22 charges in Los Angeles between 2017-2019, despite only making up 8.9% of the city's population. In one study from Compton, CA, Black adults accounted for 72.3% of those charged under § 653.22 despite only comprising 30.9% of the population. Cis and trans women comprised 100% of these arrests.

By repealing § 653.22, SB 357 eliminates law that allows police to rely on bias rather than evidence to criminalize otherwise legal activities like walking, dressing or standing in public, and results in the harassment of LGTBQ+, Black and Brown communities for simply looking like a "sex worker" to law enforcement. Arresting sex workers or persons perceived to be sex workers increases their safety risks, who are more vulnerable to exploitation and violence, and have barriers to accessing safe housing and legal employment, when they can be arrested for loitering. The legal bullying of trans people and women of color by police results in distrust, and an unwillingness to call on police to protect them and others from violence or other forms of victimization.

We urge you to support SB 357 to increase public safety. We must stop criminalizing the color of a person's skin, their gender or livelihood. We all deserve to exist in public peacefully without fear of arrest.

Sincerely,

Luz Reyes-Martin
President

CC: Assemblymember Steve Bennett, Legislative Director: Alexander.Soto@asm.ca.gov

CC: Senator Scott Wiener, Legislative Director: Angela.hill@sen.ca.gov