



THE
AMERICAN
CONSERVATIVE
UNION
FOUNDATION

CENTER FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

March 16, 2018

Dear Members of the California State Legislature:

The *American Conservative Union Foundation* works to educate Americans on a number of important issues, including the need for criminal justice reform. When it comes to improving the justice system, public safety must always come first. Within the context of criminal justice reform, we work to hold people and government agencies accountable, ensure fiscal responsibility, and maintain principles of limited government. ACUF also endeavors to advance human dignity, as we believe every life has value and meaning.

As you consider how to continue to improve the state's criminal justice system, we urge you to focus on the plight of incarcerated women.

Nationally, women are the fastest growing segment of the prison population and face difficult challenges when incarcerated. Women who are incarcerated often come in with very high rates of past traumatic experiences, with 86% of women in jails and prisons having reported being survivors of past sexual violence. In many cases women attempt, or successfully commit suicide because they refuse to become another victim.

With an epidemic of sexual assault and rape of women in prison, the government has a duty to protect those it holds behind bars. Assembly Bill 2550 would limit access by male prison guards – whenever possible – to areas where women may be in a state of undress. If there is a need to observe female inmates undressed, female guards should do so whenever possible. The legislation would also establish meaningful reporting requirements for when safety or security require access by male guards to changing rooms, showers, and rest rooms in state correctional institutions.

The *American Conservative Union Foundation* recognizes that for some, our views represent a paradigm shift. But as you consider legislation in this session, we urge you to ensure that every woman in California's prisons system is accorded basic human dignity.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact David Safavian (dsafavian@conservative.org) or Kaitlin Owens (kowens@conservative.org) at the *American Conservative Union Foundation* (202-347-9388).

Respectfully,

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Deputy Director
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