

DPSFV.com

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

April 11, 2021

RE: DPSFV Supports Senate Bill 258 (Laird): HIV & Aging Act

Representatives of the Honorable San Fernando Valley Delegation:

On behalf of the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley (DPSFV), we are pleased to report that our Executive Board voted to support SB 258, which will update the definition of “greatest social need” to include cultural or social isolation caused by HIV status. This bill will help to ensure that older people with HIV have access to the programs and services administered by the California Department of Aging.

We urge you to support this important piece of legislation.

DPSFV was founded in 1978 and is chartered by the Los Angeles County Democratic Central Committee. Our organization is the coordinating body for a coalition of twenty-one Democratic Clubs located in the six Assembly Districts (38, 39, 43, 45, 46, and 50) which are wholly or partially in the San Fernando Valley.

With recent advancement in HIV treatment, people living with HIV are living longer and older people with HIV are increasingly dominating the epidemic. Over 50% of people living with HIV in California are 50 years of age or older. People 50 and older also accounted for 15% of new HIV diagnoses in 2018.

A 2020 report by SAGE’s HIV and Aging Policy Action Coalition identified several unique challenges and barriers to services experienced by older adults living with HIV. Older people with HIV are more likely than their HIV-negative counterparts to have multiple comorbidities, including certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, and hepatitis C. Older people with HIV also face higher rates of behavioral health challenges and experience significant levels of stigma, social isolation, and loneliness.

The Federal Older Americans Act (OAA) funds various services for older adults including meals, job training, senior centers, caregiver support, transportation, health promotion, and benefits enrollment. The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers these programs and contracts with a network of 33 Area Agencies on Aging who directly manage a wide array of federal and state-funded services. The OAA specifically emphasizes that these services should be targeted to older adults with the greatest economic or social needs.

Given the unique barriers faced by older people with HIV, it is critical that California expand the definition of “greatest social need” to include cultural or social isolation caused by HIV status. This change will help to ensure that CDA develops guidance, identifies promising practices, and provides technical assistance on effective strategies to better serve older people with HIV. We urge you to support SB 258.

Please note that DPSFV will be tracking this bill as it travels through the Legislature. Your voting record will be noted and may be considered should you ever seek our endorsement. Your office is always welcome to contact DPSFV if you have any questions.

Sincerely and respectfully,



Chair Sean M. Rivas
Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley

cc: Senator John Laird (Author)
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee

PO Box 57259, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 818-995-DEMS (3367)