July 8, 2021

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
Chair  
Assembly Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Support for Senate Bill 247 (Eggman): Rare Disease Advisory Council

Dear Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez,

On behalf of the 31 undersigned patient and health care provider organizations representing or treating millions of individuals with rare diseases in California, we thank you for placing Senate Bill 247 (SB 247) on the Assembly Appropriations Committee agenda for consideration. SB 247 establishes a rare disease advisory council (RDAC) within the state, which if passed, would help to give a voice to the estimated 1-in-10 individuals living with a rare disease in the state of California.

Creating an RDAC will give rare disease patients a unified voice in California state government. Additionally, the RDAC will act as the advisory body on rare diseases to the Legislature and state departments that provide services to, or that are charged with the care of, rare disease patients. It will also be tasked with adopting and implementing regulations, researching and determining the most appropriate method to collect data on rare diseases, and identifying best practices for rare disease care.

The RDAC represents enormous value to our organizations and the communities we serve by allowing them to directly engage with a diverse group of stakeholders interested in identifying and solving pressing challenges. In addition, the RDAC would help relieve some of the burden on the state by...
expeditiously delivering direct feedback, solutions, and resources to California government decisionmakers with one community voice.

In creating this council, California would join twenty-one other states that have already enacted similar legislation in support of their rare disease community and proven that the RDAC can be an invaluable resource. Those states include: Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Once again, on behalf of the undersigned organizations and health care providers, we urge your swift consideration of SB 247 to enable the creation of a Rare Disease Advisory Council. Please feel free to contact Alyss Patel with the National Organization for Rare Disorders via email at apatel@rarediseases.org if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alyss Patel
Western Region State Policy Manager
National Organization for Rare Disorders

Fred Fisher
Fred Fisher, President & CEO
Golden West Chapter of the ALS Association

Melissa King
Melissa King, Executive Director
Americans for Cures

Christina M Pohlman
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Sophie Wallerstedt
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Tiffany Westrich-Robertson, CEO
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Autumn Ogden-Smith
Director, California State Legislation
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Melanie Lynn Lendnal
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Director of State Policy and Advocacy
American Kidney Fund

Adrienne Shapiro, CEO
Axis Advocacy

Angela Ramirez Holmes, Founder/President
CA Action Link for the Rare Diseases (Cal Rare)
Dena Feingold, Founder
Care Alliance Advocacy

John Pytel
California Coalition for PKU and Allied Disorders

Erin Foote Morgan, Interim Executive Director
Chronic Disease Coalition

Tuesdi Dyer, Executive Director
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Siri Vaeth, MSW, Executive Director
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Wendy Urushima-Conn, President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County

Cathy Teal, Executive Director
FAIR Foundation

Sonji Wilkes, Vice President of Advocacy
Hemophilia Federation of America

Stuart Miller
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Jamie Sexton, Director of State Policy
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Marc Yale, IPPF Advocacy Research Coordinator
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Heather Ferguson, Executive Director
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