*Please put on your organizational letterhead and add signature.*

*Feel free incorporate information about your organization and your reasons for supporting the bill.*

*Please submit your letter to* *brad@eqca.org* *or Becca Cramer at* *bcramer@acluca.org**.*

[DATE]

The Honorable Scott Wiener

State Capitol, Room 4066

Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

**RE: SB 239 (Wiener) – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Wiener,

[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] is pleased to support your SB 239 (Wiener), which would modernize laws that criminalize and stigmatize people living with HIV. [INSERT SENTENCE/PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION]

During the 1980s and 1990s, fear and ignorance about HIV and its transmission led California to enact discriminatory criminal laws targeting people living with HIV. These laws created unique restrictions on and harsher punishment for people living with HIV compared to people living with other communicable diseases. Since then, effective treatments have been developed that dramatically lengthen and improve the quality of life for people living with HIV. Successfully treated, people living with HIV have a near normal life expectancy and the risk of transmission to others is negligible to nonexistent.

Current HIV-specific criminal laws in California fail to reflect a science-based understanding of HIV prevention, treatment and transmission. Research suggests that criminal laws targeting HIV have done nothing to further public health, as they have not been found to influence people’s behaviors or reduce the number of new infections. Instead, these laws have been found to disproportionately impact women and people of color in California. While women living with HIV comprise only 13 percent of people living with HIV, they make up 43 percent of those criminalized under California’s HIV-specific criminal laws. Furthermore, while about half of people living with HIV in California are Black or Latino, two thirds of people criminalized under HIV specific laws are Black or Latino. Thus, criminal prosecution under these laws serves only to fuel continued stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and communities disproportionately impacted by HIV.

California criminal law should take the same approach to HIV as it does to other serious communicable diseases. We support promoting public health by reducing HIV stigma and eliminating any remaining barriers to testing and care. For these reasons, we support SB 239 and your effort to bring California law into line with current science.

Sincerely,

[INSERT SIGNATURE AND TITLE]

cc: The Honorable Todd Gloria

 The Honorable David Chiu

 Members and Committee Staff, Senate Committees on Health and Public Safety