



July 22, 2020

Senator Steve Glazer
Chair, Senate Business and Professions Committee State Capitol - Room 5108 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1998 (Low)
Position: Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Senator Glazer:

History has shown us that we are capable of making dramatic changes to repair and rebuild our country after crises, from the Great Depression to the most recent financial crisis. But every time, we have fallen short of ensuring that these recoveries are inclusive and espouse the values of our democracy. When all Americans are affected by a crisis, the solutions we implement should help all Americans. And when the crises we face expose the deep inequities that have created these imbalances, we must explicitly address them or be doomed to suffer the same fate again.

The severe impact of the coronavirus on communities of color- including their physical, economic and civic health- is the direct result of longstanding structural inequalities put in place by de jure and de facto discrimination. We now have the opportunity to address inequities that we have willfully ignored for far too long. Now is our opportunity to fundamentally address the structural racism that permeates our core institutions- housing, public safety, criminal justice and, of course, healthcare.

My interest in making our health systems more equitable is what prompted me to partner with the company Byte earlier this year. Like you, I believe strongly that all communities, and especially those that have been historically marginalized, deserve access to quality and affordable health care- and in this case dental care- for themselves and for their children. This is a basic human right. Companies like Byte expand access to teledentistry and offer the opportunity for all groups, especially low income, Black and Latino communities, to receive the dental and orthodontic care they need and deserve.

It is for these exact same reasons that I have been prompted to write to you today and respectfully request a "NO" vote on AB 1998. For too long, our systems have failed to provide equitable access to oral care and if AB 1998 passes, these groups will continue to be underserved. California should not consider legislation that would limit care and further disenfranchise a significant portion of the state population.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Washington", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kerry Washington