

March 9, 2021

The Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer, Sr.
Chair, Assembly Committee on Public Safety
1020 N St., Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 256 (Kalra) California Racial Justice Act for All - SPONSOR

Dear Chair Jones-Sawyer,

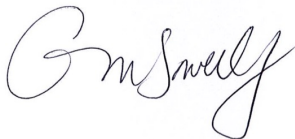
NextGen California respectfully requests your support of AB 256 (Kalra), which will extend the essential protections of the California Racial Justice Act (Chapter 317, Statutes of 2020) to all Californians.

Racial discrimination permeates California's legal system. In passing the California Racial Justice Act in 2020, the Legislature took a courageous step that will help move our justice system closer to its ideals by empowering defendants to object to convictions or sentences, if they can show that anyone involved in their case — a judge, attorney, officer, expert witness or juror — demonstrated bias during the process, or if they can show statistical evidence of demographic inequities in convictions or sentences for the same crime.

However, if prohibiting racism and bias in our court system is the moral and just thing to do, then it is the right thing to do for everyone. The Racial Justice Act of 2020 was prospective only, leaving behind those who were unfairly convicted and sentenced on the basis of race, ethnicity or national origin prior to January 1, 2021. AB 256 will address this lapse by making the Racial Justice Act retroactive, thereby creating a means for those *already* harmed by the long-standing discrimination in our courts to obtain justice.

NextGen California supports policies and programs that identify and address disparities, particularly those disproportionately impacting marginalized communities. For these reasons, we respectfully request your "aye" vote on AB 256.

Sincerely,



Arnold Sowell Jr.
Executive Director, NextGen California