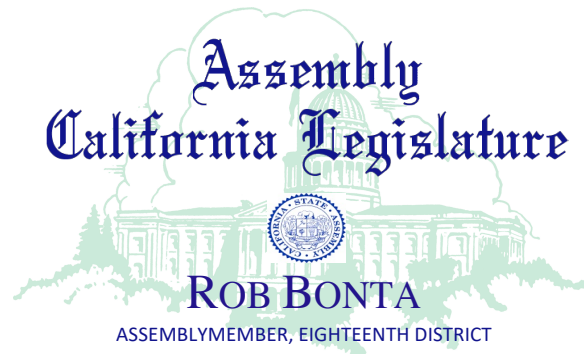


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April 18, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Reggie Jones-Sawyer, Co-Chair  
California State Assembly Special Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2117  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mark Stone, Co-Chair  
California State Assembly Special Committee  
State Capitol, Room 3146  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Speaker Rendon, Co-Chairs Jones-Sawyer, Stone and Members of the Assembly Special Committee on the Office of the Attorney General:

Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to provide written responses to the questions in your letter in preparation for the hearing regarding my nomination as Attorney General of California. Please see below detailed responses to each of your questions.

### **Police Reform: Prosecuting Police Officer Misconduct**

**Background:** In the wake of increased awareness of police killings in recent years, the Legislature has focused its attention on reducing police misconduct and limiting police officers' use of force. The killing of George Floyd added urgency to the Legislature's efforts to reform peace officer practice and culture. New statutes have changed the standard for use-of-force and named the Attorney General as the state prosecutor to investigate officer-involved shootings and prosecute the officer if you deem criminal charges warranted.

- **Will you commit to bringing legal action against bad officers, both in shootings and for disciplinary purposes?**

When reviewing any specific case, I will go where the facts lead. But I strongly believe in accountability and that law enforcement officers who abuse their position of trust – whether that’s through excessive force or misconduct – should face serious consequences. Should I be confirmed as Attorney General, one of my core priorities will be to create meaningful, lasting change in our criminal justice system and increase public trust in our institutions. It is trust that will be hard to win and all too easy to lose. I will do my utmost to be worthy of the trust placed in me to take on this challenge and meet this moment.

As part of this effort, I am committed to taking any and all appropriate actions available under the law to help ensure there is real accountability for officers who violate the public’s trust. At the California Department of Justice, we can play an important role by directly tackling this issue of accountability through a number of tools, including through civil actions, partnerships, and investigations of officer-involved shootings.

I will use the full authority of the Attorney General’s Office to promote professional and accountable policing, including investigating fatal shootings of unarmed individuals, reviewing agency policies and procedures, conducting investigations of agencies where there are patterns of serious misconduct, and identifying and promoting practices that can keep community members and officers safe. It is also important to keep in mind that the Attorney General does not have the authority to discipline or terminate local law enforcement officers—that authority belongs to local officials.

For instance, under Assembly Bill 1506, the California Department of Justice estimates that it will be called upon to investigate approximately 40 cases of officer-involved shootings of unarmed civilians each year. As a co-author of AB 1506, I am committed to working with the Governor’s Office and the Legislature to ensure the Department is able to successfully launch this critical new program. At the end of the day, getting this right is about giving the families of victims confidence that there is a fair and impartial process in place to capably and timely investigate these serious, deadly incidents.

- **Will you take the lead in reforming peace officer culture, to eliminate racism and break the code of silence?**

Yes. If confirmed, I’m ready to work with community organizations, law enforcement, and the Legislature to tackle these important issues. This includes having an open door and listening to all who walk through, elevating the best ideas for reform — no matter who brings them to the table.

I strongly believe that we need to build more trust between law enforcement and our communities. Californians are hurting and I have seen communities that are struggling to trust our institutions. I also believe that most of our partners in law enforcement truly are

ethical and hard-working and want to cultivate and build trust because it is a key component for keeping our communities safe.

As Attorney General, I will work to offer guidance to our local partners to address these concerns and I will make the difficult choices when called upon to do so. I take this responsibility solemnly and seriously and I recognize the challenges ahead.

- **How will you resolve the conflict between the Attorney General's role as the state's leading law enforcement officer and prosecutor of police misconduct?**

Should I have the honor of being confirmed as California's next Attorney General, I will be the people's attorney. That will be my guiding principle. My fundamental responsibility will be to do everything in my power to enforce and apply the laws fairly and impartially. California has passed a number of laws in recent years, virtually all which I have supported, to increase transparency and build public trust with law enforcement institutions. My job will be to implement and enforce those important reforms, and I will not shirk that duty.

As Attorney General, I will stand up for all Californians. I will fight against injustice. I will be a voice for the most vulnerable in our communities. It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from, or who you love, an injustice against one is an injustice against us all.

I will push for a more restorative approach to justice and I will work to support our communities in the effort to reimagine how we do public safety while standing up for the rights of victims.

- **Do you support reform of the Bane Civil Rights Act to provide greater accountability for police misconduct, as reflected in SB 2 (Bradford)?**

As an Assemblymember, I am a co-author of Senate Bill 2 and I am supportive of the improved accountability. If individual officers break the law, we must have tools to hold them accountable. I look forward to working with law enforcement, community organizations, the Legislature, and personnel at the California Department of Justice on this critical issue.

- **Will you support creation of a statewide process to decertify peace officers for misconduct, as reflected in bills now before the Legislature, including SB 2?**

Again, I am a co-author of SB 2 and do support the creation of a statewide decertification system. California often goes first and boldly leads the pack, but it has not when it comes to decertification of problem officers. I support the efforts to ensure that all of our officers meet the highest standards and have the trust of our communities. I look forward to working with law enforcement, community organizations, the Legislature, and personnel at the California Department of Justice on this critical issue.

- **Will you timely comply with both the letter and spirit of the California Public Records Act requiring disclosure of police misconduct files?**

Yes. Senate Bill 1421 empowers the public by giving them the information they need to help hold law enforcement accountable. If confirmed, I am committed to helping shine a light on misconduct where it occurs.

I am also committed to reviewing existing procedures and working to identify mechanisms that will help ensure that all future, relevant records provided to the Department can be more readily tracked and disclosed. Importantly, one of my goals will be to help provide a clear standard for transparency for our law enforcement partners across the state.

- **Do you believe that when an elected law enforcement official accepts campaign contributions from law enforcement officers and organizations, that the elected official has a conflict of interest with those organizations? How will you resolve the conflicts of interest between police unions who contribute to prosecutor political campaigns and the prosecutors who accept the contributions?**

I strongly believe bolstering public trust in our institutions and in the independence of our elected prosecutors. I am ready to work together with the Legislature, law enforcement, and community organizations to address these difficult issues. Further, I will work with personnel at the California Department of Justice to identify areas where we can take direct action or offer guidance to our local partners to increase public trust and avoid the appearance of bias, using the laws that are already in place. Ultimately, we must take solution-oriented steps to help restore faith in the promise of equal justice under the law.

### **Armed/Prohibited Persons Systems (APPS): Taking Guns from Prohibited Persons**

**Background:** For many years, the Department of Justice has had a backlog of cases where state law requires removing firearms from felons and others who are barred from owning firearms, “prohibited persons.” The Legislature has appropriated additional funds for APPS and has limited expansion of the prohibited-persons list, to address the backlog, but the backlog persists.

- **How do you plan to eliminate the backlog in APPS cases?**

Nobody should have to fear gun violence at work, in school, or in prayer. We cannot accept mass shootings as a regular feature of our democracy. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were nearly 40,000 firearms-related deaths in the United States in 2019 alone. California’s Armed and Prohibited Persons System program is one tool available at the California Department of Justice to help address this urgent public health threat.

Since 2016 an average of more than 10,000 people has been added to the APPS list each year. Each year a number close to that is removed. There will always be a significant number of prohibited persons in APPS because new active cases come in each year and

there will continue to be a large number of unresolved pending cases. With that said, I am committed to working with the Legislature and will take solution-oriented steps to demonstrate progress of improving this system because it is critical we get it right.

As a starting point, we can and should forge ahead on the hiring and training of special agents to continue enforcement of the APPS program to get firearms out of the hands of prohibited, dangerous individuals. We must also continue the work to modernize the state's firearms databases and technical infrastructure to cut down on unnecessary delays. Under the current process, the applicable databases are not fully integrated and analysts are required to conduct manual checks before law enforcement personnel can initiate investigative operations. The Department has received funds to support the initial stages of this process and, should I be confirmed, I will work to ensure its timely completion — and to secure additional funds to move to the next phase of system modernization.

- **How will you collaborate with local law enforcement in implementing APPS?**

As Attorney General, I will lead the California Department of Justice as it continues to improve existing coordination and cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, including through the use of joint APPS task forces that can serve as important force multipliers. I look forward to working with the Department and its partners across the state to learn more about the existing challenges and potential avenues for addressing this critical public health and safety challenge.

- **What priorities would you set for removing guns from prohibited persons?**

The most recent APPS report identifies a number of priority areas for strengthening the state's process for removing guns from prohibited persons, including through legislation, the budget process, partnership, and administrative action.

Critically, additional personnel are needed to timely tackle the enforcement work APPS agents do every day. If we want to get firearms out of the hands of prohibited, dangerous individuals, we must continue to work to hire and train special agents. The Department must also continue the process of modernizing the state's firearms databases and technical infrastructure to help cut down on unnecessary delays. These actions will increase the Department's ability to work through the APPS list. If confirmed, I will gain a greater sense of the timing associated with modernization and working with the Department's partners. I want to think creatively about how to effectively, efficiently and quickly remove guns from those who should not own them.

- **Will you timely share the Department of Justice's gun database with researchers such as the California Firearm Violence Research Center, as authorized by state law?**

Data-driven research is a critical component in pushing forward informed public policy to combat persistent problems like gun violence. We must take all appropriate steps to ensure such work can continue. If confirmed, I look forward to working with personnel at

the California Department of Justice, researchers, and the Legislature to help ensure that researchers have the data they need as authorized under the law.

## **Countering Racial Violence and Hatred**

**Background:** When Governor Newsom nominated you, you identified hatred and violence against Asian-Americans as a “top priority.” You explained that “people are hurting, scared, anxious, angry and it’s a full-on state of emergency, state of crisis and important.” In recent years, many communities of color, in California and across the nation, have suffered violence due to racial hatred.

- **How will you address racial violence in all communities of color?**

Throughout California’s history, too many of us — Asian, Latino, Black, Native American, LGBTQ, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh Californians — have felt the sting of hate and discrimination. And, despite progress at the federal, state, and local levels, hate crimes persist and continue to have a toxic effect on all of our communities. If I have the honor of being confirmed, one of my core priorities will be to make sure that we stand up for those facing the forces of hate and that we hold perpetrators of hate crimes accountable.

Broadly, as Attorney General, I will work to ensure local law enforcement have the tools they need to enforce existing laws and strengthen community partnerships to help improve mechanisms for reporting and tracking hate crimes. Where appropriate, I will also take steps to directly provide assistance through the activation of the California Department of Justice’s Hate Crime Rapid Response Team to supplement the efforts of local and federal law enforcement. Cooperation across jurisdictions and community groups will be critical in order to quickly and decisively respond to hate crime and racial violence in our state.

Given the recent rise in hate crimes and hate incidents against members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community in particular, we have to recommit ourselves to engaging with our communities to determine how we can better serve the needs of all Californians facing hate. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Legislature and the civil, criminal, and law enforcement experts at the California Department of Justice to confront the challenge before us.

- **Will you look beyond hate crimes, to countering incidents of hate that may not rise to the level of a criminal offense?**

Yes. Hate does not define who we are as a state, nor what we can achieve. To that point, I can’t help but think back to an earlier era of California and a photograph I have of a sign in a hotel lobby from the 1920s that says, “Positively No Filipinos Allowed.” In today’s California, everyone is not just allowed: we belong. We have created one of the most diverse states in the world and we must continue our efforts to make it a model of compassion, understanding, and inclusion.

- **Will you counter racial hatred and extremism that appears online or on social media?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will take steps to help push back against the spread of online hate and extremism. Change will not happen overnight and our success will hinge on our ability to work collaboratively and purposefully with both government and private actors. Whether it's making information about unlawful harassment and intimidation more readily available to victims or advocating for stronger filtering, reporting, and blocking tools, we can all play an integral part in this fight. I look forward to working with the California Department of Justice and our partners across the country to forge ahead on this complex issue.

- **What do you consider domestic terrorism that will require federal law enforcement assistance to prevent?**

There is no place for violent extremism and domestic terrorism in our society and, no matter where it occurs, cooperation across jurisdictions will be critical in order to quickly and decisively prevent and respond to politically motivated violence.

Unfortunately, in recent years, we've all seen evidence of domestic terrorism on the rise. Individuals and groups fueled by hate are all too ready to threaten or commit acts of violence in an attempt to further their political objectives by sowing discord and fear, and disrupting our democracy. If confirmed, I will use the resources available to the Office of the Attorney General to help protect our communities from domestic terrorism by working with our partners at the local, state, and federal level and, where appropriate, taking steps to help prosecute perpetrators to the fullest extent under the law.

Californians should not have to live in fear of targeted anti-Asian, anti-Black, anti-LGBTQ, or anti-immigrant attacks at their work, school, place of worship, or local grocery store by homegrown, anti-American extremists. Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with our partners at the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and other law enforcement personnel at the state, local, and federal levels to learn more about ways to confront the challenges presented by domestic terrorism in California.

- **How will you build trust with communities of color who now have little trust in law enforcement authorities in light of police misconduct?**

As I mentioned previously, we must build more trust between law enforcement and our communities. I have seen and heard firsthand from communities who are hurting and have little to no trust in law enforcement given police misconduct. I have also seen and heard from partners in law enforcement that the majority of our law enforcement offices truly want to cultivate and build that trust because it is necessary to keeping our communities safe. That means we need real accountability. Recognizing that it's time for change, many in law enforcement have made it clear that they are ready to work together towards implementing basic measures like a process for decertification.

I'm ready to work with community organizations, law enforcement, and the Legislature to tackle this critical issue. I will reach out to neighborhood groups, local government officials and the officers on the street to solicit and explore the best ideas for reform — no matter who brings them to the conversation.

I will not be afraid to make difficult choices and I will work to offer guidance to our local partners when it is needed. I do not take this responsibility lightly and I will work to evaluate and bolster our tools for strengthening police accountability in the state.

## **Environmental Justice – Air, Water, Land**

**Background:** In recent years, public attention to environmental contamination and pollution suffered by traditionally underserved communities of color has grown substantially. They suffer greater air pollution, contaminated water and other impacts from the state's polluters. Cal Enviro Screen has identified the communities that are most vulnerable and suffer the greatest pollution impacts. DOJ's Environmental Unit has prioritized prosecutions of polluters in those communities. The recent bankruptcy of the Exide battery company, and the State assuming millions of dollars in unreimbursed clean-up costs for its LA County facility, have exposed gaps in California's laws designed to hold polluters accountable. Recent reports allege that the California District Attorneys Association improperly redirected funding slated for environmental enforcement to the Association's own needs.

- **What steps would you take to expand environmental protection for California's most vulnerable communities?**

Every Californian should have the opportunity to live in a community that is healthy and safe. But the reality is that some communities in California — particularly low-income communities and communities of color — unacceptably continue to bear the brunt of environmental pollution and public health hazards.

If I am confirmed as Attorney General, I am prepared to use every tool in the California Department of Justice's toolbox — from partnering with state agency regulators, to conducting independent investigations and filing lawsuits, and engaging with local governments and industry during environmental review processes — to make sure our communities aren't breathing toxic air or drinking dirty water. I look forward to working with community organizations, the Legislature, and the experts at the California Department of Justice to identify potential areas for further action and push forward on this key issue.

- **If confirmed, how would you ensure that the state is better positioned to recover costs from polluters and protect taxpayers and vulnerable communities?**

As Attorney General, I will work with client agencies of the Department to build financial assurances and cost recovery mechanisms up front when considering permitting and settlement decisions. Thereafter, when a company breaks the law, it should be held accountable, particularly when its actions harm the health and safety of our most



vulnerable communities. Working with the Department of Justice, as well as its state partners, like the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, we can face the challenges and work together to tackle this critical issue. In the Department's independent capacity, I am committed to exploring both civil and criminal action, where appropriate, to address the damage caused by polluters to Californians and our environment.

- **How would you ensure that funds directed to protecting the public from polluters are spent on protecting the public good?**

Any misuse of public funds is deeply concerning. Californians deserve to be able to have confidence that our institutions are using environmental protection funds for their intended purpose. Broadly speaking, compliance with proper auditing practices, including audits by the California State Auditor, can play a key role in addressing these matters across the state and, where appropriate, I am prepared to use the tools available at the California Department of Justice to take direct action and provide assistance. If confirmed, I will work to help ensure that public safety funds directed toward specific purposes are used as they were intended, to improve oversight and transparency of expenditures of funds.

### **Employment Development Department Fraud**

**Background:** In the last year, unemployment insurance fraud has grown substantially in light of an overwhelming number of claims, an antiquated computer system, increased federal funding, limited fiscal oversight, and other problems at the Employment Development Department. Some fraudulent claims reportedly were filed from California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR) facilities.

- **How will you collaborate with county district attorneys in prosecuting such fraud?**

We must work together across jurisdictions to put a stop to unemployment fraud targeting the California Employment Development Department. Criminal fraudsters don't just harm taxpayers, they also siphon funds away from families in need who have struggled to stay afloat during this pandemic in particular. A District Attorney may lack jurisdiction to pursue a certain crime or lack sufficient capacity to pursue a particularly complex or wide-ranging fraud scheme. The Attorney General has greater capacity to investigate and prosecute complex fraud cases and should be used where appropriate. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the California Department of Justice's existing efforts in this area and identifying additional avenues for collaboration with our law enforcement partners across jurisdictions to investigate and prosecute fraud to the fullest extent under the law.

- **Will you prosecute CDCR if found to have participated in the fraud?**

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is a client agency of the California Department of Justice; however, the Department retains the ability to take legal action where necessary. Specifically, the Department is equipped to keep a potential

criminal prosecution separate from the handling of civil client matters. However, where appropriate, such matters can also be handled by district attorneys when they occur in their jurisdictions.

## **Consumer Protection**

**Background:** In recent years, the Legislature has bolstered the state's consumer protection statutes, on financial protection, privacy, elder abuse, and housing discrimination. The Attorney General has the authority and the responsibility to protect California consumers, although you will share that authority with other state agencies.

- **What are your top consumer protection priorities for California, both as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, and over the long-term?**

As we enter the recovery phase of the pandemic, we need to continue to stop bad actors from using COVID-19 as a way to scam people. Across the country, we've already seen various attacks on consumers related to the coronavirus, including through vaccine scams, snake oil cures, and illegal telemarketers who try to use the pandemic to shake down people for money or personal information. We must also be prepared to consider the pitfalls that may lie ahead as our economy begins to recover. We need to be nimble and ready to enforce our laws against predatory practices by financial institutions, landlords, or other entities, protecting tenants from eviction and helping families stay afloat.

As we move on from the pandemic, we also need to recognize that not everything will go back to the pre-COVID era. People are spending more time online for both work and personal use. Californians have the strongest data privacy rights in the nation and it's the California Department of Justice's job to enforce the California Consumer Privacy Act. In California, we also have the right to a fair and open internet through net neutrality. As an Assemblymember, I helped author the state's net neutrality bill, Senate Bill 822, and, if confirmed, I will make its enforcement a priority. Whether people shop online or in person, the economy needs to be fair and free of illegal activity. If confirmed, consumer protection will be one of my top priorities, particularly when it comes to standing up for our more vulnerable populations.

- **How do you plan to collaborate with other state agencies that have authority to protect consumers, such as the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation?**

California consumers are frequently challenged by a broad range of unfair, deceptive or outright illegal business practices and scams. The Department of Justice and other state entities like the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation, or the new California Privacy Protection Agency all bring different tools and have important roles in enforcing consumer protection laws and safeguarding consumers from abusive practices. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the California Department of Justice's partnership efforts with DFPI and other state, federal and local agencies to protect Californians from illegal business practices. The more we can align the efforts and

resources of our state, federal and local agency partners, the more we can do to protect consumers in California. As part of that, I am committed to collaborating with these government entities, as well as consumer groups and legitimate business interests to identify the best ideas for action — no matter who brings them to the table.

- **What steps will you take to identify unfair housing practices that affect our most vulnerable communities?**

As an Assemblymember, I helped successfully fight back against rent gouging and unjust evictions to protect millions of Californians who rent the place they call home. I am clear-eyed about the challenges we face, but I know what it takes to stand up for our most vulnerable communities. In California, too many live in fear that they are just one paycheck short of losing their home. Too many have never been fairly afforded their shot at the American Dream because of historic inequities, including redlining or unequal access to credit.

Working with the Housing and Community Development Department and the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, has a key role to play in identifying unfair or unlawful housing practices and then taking the necessary steps to eliminate those practices. Those steps can range from demanding that a jurisdiction cease the practice and up to enforcement litigation. Additionally, as Attorney General I will work closely with the augmented enforcement division at the Housing and Community Development Department to ensure that communities across the state are all adhering to their housing requirements. The Department can also comment on regulations, weigh in on existing legal cases, and take independent action. I am hopeful that through our relationships with federal, state and local agencies, as well as with legal aid organizations and, we will combat misconduct and act swiftly to protect Californians.

## **Immigration and Immigrants**

**Background:** California has a long history of protecting immigrants. When the last president started aggressive enforcement against immigrants and narrowing the rules for asylum, the Legislature passed SB 54 (De León) to limit California’s law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration enforcement agencies. The number of unaccompanied child immigrants and children separated from their parents increased. The Federal Government began violating the 1997 *Flores* settlement agreement on minimum standards for initially-detained children. In California, the state agency with licensing/oversight of facilities that serve detained children is the Department of Social Services (CDSS). CDSS currently licenses Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes to provide these services to unaccompanied undocumented minors.

- **What role will you play in ensuring that the Federal Government and these facilities comply with the *Flores* requirements?**

California is home to more immigrants than any other state in the country. Our diverse communities aren’t just important drivers of our economy, they are part of who we are. Immigrants are in our DNA. Should I be confirmed, I will continue our state’s efforts to

stand up for the rights of our immigrant communities and build on the California Department of Justice's existing expertise on these issues.

When it comes to ensuring immigrant children in particular are protected, partnership is key. The Department can and must continue to work with the federal government on the current regulations related to the *Flores* settlement agreement, coordinating with attorneys general across the country and providing public comment where appropriate. The Department can and must continue to provide robust assistance to the California Department of Social Services as a partner agency and client. The Department can and must be prepared to act where needed and called to do so, filing friend-of-the-court briefs and working with the Legislature, community organizations, and the Governor's Office to help ensure immigrant children are treated humanely.

I am prepared and ready to take on this challenge and step up for all immigrant children in California. Ultimately, standing up for the rights of immigrants will require extensive partnership across federal, state, and local jurisdictions and, as a Filipino American who came to this country as a baby and as the son of an immigrant from the Philippines, it will always be one of my top priorities.

- **Given the recent influx of unaccompanied minors into the US, how should California ensure that our state is ready to meet our legal (and moral) obligations to these children?**

No matter who they are or where they come from, all children deserve to be treated with care and compassion. Period. Making that happen during the pandemic will require unprecedented coordination and partnership across all levels of government. If confirmed, I am prepared to work with our partners across the state to elevate the voices of the most vulnerable among us, take action, and advocate for change where needed. As a state, that means we must step up to the plate and work together to ensure that, at a minimum, all legal requirements are being met for the care of immigrant children in California.

- **How will you ensure that law enforcement agencies minimize cooperation with federal immigration authorities?**

I hope there are changes in federal immigration practices so that we can work cooperatively to welcome immigrants to our state and country. As an Assemblymember, I was a principal co-author of the California Values Act, Senate Bill 54. SB 54 ensures our immigrant community members feel safe accessing vital services, including at schools, hospitals, and courthouses. Importantly, it helps build trust while also making sure law enforcement retain the tools they need to protect our communities. Trust between California's immigrant communities and state and local agencies is a central part of our state's public safety efforts. The Attorney General has a supervisory role for law enforcement agencies and is responsible for enforcing the law on behalf of the People of California to the extent any agencies do not adhere to state law, including the TRUST Act and the TRUTH Act. If confirmed, I am committed to working with community

organizations and law enforcement across the state to help ensure SB 54's requirements remain clear.

## **Department of Justice Operations – Rape Kits**

**Background:** The Department of Justice has reported a substantial backlog of untested rape kits. A recent audit revealed that a large number of law enforcement agencies and crime labs have failed to report on the status of their rape kit testing.

- **How will you reduce the backlog of rape kit testing and increase local agency reporting on rape kit testing?**

Anything we can do to support and stand up for survivors of sexual assault is critical. When it comes to processing sexual assault evidence kits, the personnel at the California Department of Justice work day in and day out to get the job done. In fact, the Department currently only has a working load of cases as they come in for processing within the parameters established by Senate Bill 22. It does not have a backlog.

However, we're going to have to keep working with our partners across the state to better track and process any outstanding kits still in the possession of local agencies beyond those that are already accounted for in the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Tracking Database. Where we can, we will work directly with local agencies to help them ensure their sexual assault kits are processed. In the past, the Department has done that through the administration of grants to help local agencies move these kits along and, if confirmed, I am committed to continuing those types of programs where we're enabled to do so by the Legislature.

Ultimately, tackling this challenge will require steadfast partnership across the board. Survivors of sexual assault deserve to know their cases are being taken seriously.

- **How will you help make the prevention and prosecution of sexual assault a priority for law enforcement agencies across the state?**

If confirmed, I am prepared to use the Office of the Attorney General stand for survivors of sexual assault. Whether it's in our schools or on the job, nobody should have to fear sexual assault; nobody should be afraid to come forward and be heard. It will take partnership and perseverance, collaboration and dialogue to overcome this challenge and I am committed to pushing forward on this critical issue.

- **How can the Department of Justice expand research to better inform our understanding of sexual assault – and guide prevention and prosecution?**

The California Department of Justice receives and compiles data related to sexual assault from law enforcement agencies across the state. The majority of that information is available in crime summary statistics on OpenJustice and the through the annual Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Tracking Database program report. Where permitted under

the law, I look forward to working with the California Department of Justice's experts community organizations, and researchers to determine potential additional avenues for using this information to better inform our understanding of sexual assault and guiding prevention and prosecution efforts. Anything we can do to support and stand up for survivors of sexual assault is critical.

Thank you again for the opportunity to engage in such critical topics impacting Californians and for allowing me the time to discuss my priorities and goals as Attorney General, should I have the honor of a lifetime to be confirmed by the Legislature. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact my Chief of Staff, Viviana Becerra at [Viviana.Becerra@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Viviana.Becerra@asm.ca.gov) or 916-319-2018. I look forward to discussing these issues and more in greater detail during the Assembly Committee hearing on Wednesday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob Bonta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Rob" and "Bonta" being capitalized and prominent.

ROB BONTA  
Assemblymember, 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

**CC:** Members of the Assembly Special Committee on the Office of the Attorney General