



## Californians United for a Responsible Budget

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**February 17, 2016**

Honorable Senators  
California State Senate  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 516 (Mullin): OPPOSE**

Dear Honorable Senators,

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) opposes AB 516 (Mullin), which would unfairly penalize consumers who, through no fault of their own, do not receive their permanent license plates within 90 days. The bill would adversely affect low-income drivers and communities of color, and would create costs that are unjustified and unwarranted.

CURB is a statewide coalition of over 70 organizations working to stop prison and jail construction, reduce the number of people incarcerated, and invest in alternatives to incarceration, education, and strengthening the social safety net. CURB fights to end unjust and unnecessary penal sanctions that disproportionately criminalize low-income communities of color, and unfortunately AB 516 does exactly this.

While we support the intent of AB 516 to provide temporary license tags in order to make cars identifiable for law enforcement and other legal purposes, CURB is concerned about the impact on consumers, particularly those who are low-income. The bill allows the use of temporary plates for a 90-day period, but includes no requirement for dealers and service providers to ensure that permanent plates are actually delivered to the consumer within this period. The bill would make it easier for various entities to unfairly penalize consumers who have not received their permanent license because of circumstances that are beyond their control, such as: 1) dealers going out of business without submitting registration documents to the Department of Motor Vehicles; 2) dealers who fail to obtain proper titles to vehicles prior to sale; 3) first-line service providers who fail to process documents and send permanent license plates to the correct address in a timely fashion; 4) computer errors or other mistakes made by the DMV.

This bill would leave consumers highly vulnerable in such situations, imposing harsh penalties upon them if they continue to drive with temporary tags. In addition, this bill would make altering a temporary tag a felony offense, which carries serious life-long



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consequences. Ultimately, AB 516 creates yet another way to funnel individuals into California's already bloated criminal justice system.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area (LCCR) recently published, in collaboration with other groups, a report entitled *Not Just a Ferguson Problem: How Traffic Courts Drive Inequality in California*, which shows the many ways that low-income California drivers, and particularly communities of color, are impacted by unfair laws that result in license suspensions and hefty fines, and that lead people into an endless cycle of debt and court involvement from which they cannot extricate themselves. Rather than reverse this trend, AB 516 would contribute to it.

For these reasons, CURB must oppose AB 516 unless it is amended to provide reasonable protections for car buyers from the arbitrary 90-day deadline and to eliminate the felony penalty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lizzie Buchen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lizzie Buchen  
*Statewide Advocacy and Communication Coordinator*  
*Californians United for a Responsible Budget*

cc: Asm. Kevin Mullin