



Aug. 22, 2018

Honorable Senator Ricardo Lara
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB-174 Citizens of the state. – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lara,

Independent California is a group devoted to policy changes that take California in a more independent direction.

I am writing today to express our support for SB 174, which would open up service on California's state boards and commissions to all adult California residents. As it stands, only U.S. Citizens can serve on most of California's boards and commissions, effectively excluding nearly 5 million adult California residents from consideration.¹

The question before us is, **do we believe enough in the judgment of state elected officials to decide who serves on state boards and commissions, or should the federal immigration system continue serve as an additional gatekeeper?**

We believe the former: decisions about our state government should be handled by our state elected officials, not a distant federal government that, at least in the area of

¹ Source: U.S. Census, "Voting Age Population by Citizenship and Race (CVAP)," 2011-2015 estimates


immigration, appears not to have California's best interests at heart.

Furthermore, we are heartened to see that the outdated and unconstitutional language which excludes "children of alien transients" from state citizenship will finally be removed from state law, but we hope this is just a first step.

Going back to the beginning of the American republic, states have always had the power to extend political rights, including citizenship itself, beyond those deemed eligible by the federal government.² In other words, it is ultimately up to California voters, not the federal government, to determine the extent to which we include Californians who do not hold U.S. citizenship in our political community.

We urge you and other California politicians to think carefully about who is in the best position to determine California's future. Are we content to let a 30-year-old immigration system enforced by a hostile administration continue to act as gatekeeper? Or is it time for California citizenship to include, as Governor Jerry Brown put it, **everyone who has come to California for a better life and has contributed to the well-being of our state?**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Marin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Marin
Chair of the Board
Independent California
dave.marin@independentca.org

² See for example "State Citizenship Has Roots in American History" by law professor Peter Spiro in the New York Times, Aug. 15, 2018.