



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7240
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 796 (Alvarado-Gil)—Threats: schools and places of worship

Dear Senator Alvarado-Gil,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I write in support of SB 796, which aims to protect schools and places of worship from violent and deadly threats, including threats of mass shootings and targeted violence.

As the second-largest municipal police agency in Los Angeles County, the Long Beach Police Department (LBPd) is committed to enhancing public safety efforts by reducing crime, enhancing safety, building trust, and supporting the wellness of our workforce and our community. Existing law under Penal Code Section 422 prohibits threats of violence when a specific person is named, but it does not prohibit threats to commit a shooting or mass-casualty incident at a specific location or event when a specific person is not named. SB 796 would ensure that law enforcement would have the ability to properly investigate and prosecute these threats, while also advancing the safety of our schools and places of worship.

The City supports legislation that broadens the definition of hate crimes and domestic terrorism, and immediate law enforcement response is crucial to assess the credibility of potential threats. Since 2021, LBPd has responded to 32 bomb threats, 3,701 terrorist threat (reports), and 1,110 threatening phone calls for service. The existing legal gap poses a challenge for law enforcement to thoroughly investigate and prosecute these cases, despite the significant harm inflicted on communities when an individual communicates a threat to cause death or serious bodily injury. SB 796 will help ensure LBPd has the proper tools and resources needed to protect the Long Beach community.

For these reasons, the City supports SB 796.

Sincerely,

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

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District