



CaliforniaCivilLiberties.org

California Civil Liberties Advocacy  
1242 Bridge Street, #65  
Yuba City, CA 95991  
(916) 741-2560

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The California Civil Liberties Advocacy (CCLA) **OPPOSES** Assembly Bill – 2. Adding peace officers to the list of hate crimes ignores three significant factors about the reality of our country.

What warrants Peace Officers as needing greater protection in their status? Is it the higher danger of a life dedicated to protecting the law and order of our state? Noble as that may be, it is a threat known and appreciated before one becomes a police officer. It is, in fact, where much of the respect of the populace comes from. However, we do not award such protections to peers in similar situations. We do not offer this to our Fire Departments, or our Coast Guard. Do Peace Officers warrant the classification because of threats held against them for doing their job? Why then do we not wish to offer such protections to those who act as District Attorneys, Public Defenders, or judges in such a manner? Like peace officers, each of these groups have long held a strong status in this country – a status of power. This comes about because police deaths throughout the United States have raised in number in the last year. This bill is proposed out of reactionary fear.

Why shouldn't we offer these protections to the police? We don't wish to promote a "Police State." A state wherein the average citizen is more afraid of the repercussions of challenging any authority than to fulfill their civic duty to speak out against flawed policy. That is the consequence of this bill. It is telling those that believe public discussion of policy is still viable that their concerns shall not be met, while it doubles-down on the portions of the populace most likely to feel alienated by peace officers. It builds a wall rather than promoting growth, and it does so despite the fact that police are an empowered section of our population. They have strong public support and their participation in the democratic process has never been disproportionately weak within this state.

What's more, this would be hard to enforce acutely. What is the difference between a person who strikes a cop because he or she genuinely believes the cop acts in malice and one who strikes a cop because he or she feels it is okay and just to harm cops? For every other member of the list of protected classes, the answer is clear. The protected class doesn't actively seek those who might mean it harm and then try to control the situation with intimidation and threat of force.

For these reasons and more, the California Civil Liberties Advocacy is against AB-2. Again, we feel that rather than protect a group that has been historically weakened, it protects a group that has been historically empowered. Rather than help heal an open wound, it builds a wall, and in so doing it harms the democratic process and makes a tangled mess. This is not good policy.

Respectfully,

Nicholas Gonzales  
Legislative Advocate for CCLA  
(916) 741-2560

*"Indifference to personal liberty is but the precursor of the state's hostility to it."  
– Justice Kennedy, U.S. Supreme Court*

[n.gonzales@caliberty.net](mailto:n.gonzales@caliberty.net)

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