



California Assembly Judiciary Committee
Mark Stone, Chairperson
1021 O Street, Suite 5740
Sacramento, CA 94249

Dear Chairperson Stone:

On behalf of the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber Board of Directors, I am writing this letter to express our support for AB 2164 (Lee) and AB 2829 (Low), legislation designed to increase certainty in ADA compliance and support for small businesses in their efforts to remain accessible and avoid legal action. This issue is a high priority to our membership, and we would urge the Judiciary Committee's approval of this legislation.

AB2164 designates a portion of each business license fees (\$4) to be earmarked to provide financial assistance to businesses for the purpose of ADA modifications. Budgeting certainty is a critical element of local government decision-making on whether to create or continue programs. By removing the uncertainty that the sunset date provides, AB 2164 would allow local governments such as Los Altos to improve their CASp (Certified Access Specialist Inspection programs) thereby assisting more small businesses and increasing overall compliance.

Additionally, AB 2829 (Low) would establish the Certified Access Specialist Inspection Grant Program to assist small businesses in obtaining CASp inspections and would require the State Architect to administer the program. The bill would authorize small businesses, defined as a business with fewer than 500 employees, to apply for a grant for a CASp inspection of the small business's property, in an amount equal to the actual cost of the inspection, not to exceed \$3,000. The bill would require the State Architect to develop an application and to develop criteria to evaluate and award the grants.

Both bills will aid in ADA compliance and assist our small businesses with the financial requirements of becoming CASp certified. It is imperative that we support our local businesses through CASp Certification. Making our businesses accessible to all is not only the law, but it is the right thing to do. However, the lawsuits that have been nefariously filed seeking settlement during a global pandemic have put many businesses on the brink of ruin. The per square foot rental rates for restaurants, retail, and service provider storefronts in Los Altos are incredibly high. Pandemic protocols have forced business closures and restricted revenues. This has made it increasingly difficult to carry such high overhead without sufficient income. Businesses are trying desperately to recover and repay the debt that they have incurred, and nefarious lawsuits seeking settlement have proven to be more than a business owner can manage during such difficult times.

We would urge swift passage by the Judiciary Committee and thank you for your leadership and consideration of this request. As always, I thank you for your support of our local businesses, and the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce.

Most Sincerely,

Kim Mosley, President & CEO
Los Altos Chamber of Commerce