

March 13, 2009

Senator Ellen Corbett  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Senate Bill 115 (Lowenthal) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Corbett,

The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCL) supports SB 115, which will be heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 31<sup>st</sup>. SB 115 would allow public employees and applicants to decline to sign the loyalty oath requirement based upon their moral, ethical and religious beliefs provided they are willing to uphold the laws of the land.

While it is obvious that the loyalty oath requirement will not deter those who would engage in terrorism or other violent activities, those who are impacted are people whose religious or personal convictions are in conflict with the loyalty oath requirements. Last year, two university instructors, Marianne Kearney-Brown and Wendy Gonaver, both members of the Religious Society of Friends, were terminated by the California State University because they could not in good conscience adhere to their oath without clarifying that they could only defend the Constitution nonviolently.

These are people who uphold the laws of the land and pose no threat to society. The choices they face are to set aside their religious convictions and sign the oath—which trivializes both—or they may refuse to sign the oath and be denied employment. Though Kearney-Brown and Gonaver were eventually reinstated, it was only after considerable legal wrangling and a lot of negative publicity for the CSU.

People of faith and people with deep rooted personal and moral convictions make outstanding contributions to public service. They should not be denied employment on account of their religious or personal convictions.

For these reasons, I urge passage of Senate Bill 115.

Sincerely yours,

Your signature

Your name

Your street address

**Note: Please mail your letter(s) (postmarked no later than March 20<sup>th</sup>) to the Friends Committee on Legislation, 717 K St., Suite 500-B, Sacramento, CA 95814.**