



**Thomas Peters, Ph.D.**  
President & Chief Executive Officer

April 2, 2019

Jan Masaoka, CEO  
California Association of Nonprofits

*Via Email*

Dear Jan:

Having known and admired you over many years, I want to write you directly to express my substantial concern regarding AB1712.

My fine colleagues in the leadership of the League of California Community Foundations have been in discussions, including with Assembly Member Wicks and her staff, regarding specific concerns that many of us share regarding the Bill's current draft. In doing so, they have my full concurrence and support. Here I'll share my personal thoughts.

While in no way impugning the positive intent behind the Bill, its current language is an odd collection of errors, misunderstandings and non-sequiturs.

In the aggregate, these lead to impractical and potentially counterproductive proposals. If the Bill were merely focused on administrative or operational issues, that would be one thing. But the potential for negative implications from the Bill runs even broader and deeper.

For example, how can one go from citing unequivocally positive data depicting the considerable growth of private philanthropy, with its myriad benefits to millions of youngsters, individuals, families and their communities, to then painting a picture of philanthropy that is so foreboding?

The Bill singles out a popular vehicle that allows tens of thousands of people to engage in community philanthropy. Their generosity annually provides hundreds of millions of dollars to preschool for toddlers, services for the elderly, clinics for the ill, art for the soul, protections for the planet, research for cures and much, much more.

It would be a bitter irony if the State of California chose this time of social and political upheaval not to celebrate this generosity but to denigrate it, not to encourage it but to challenge it.

The broad-brush painting of philanthropy in the dark colors of innuendo and allegation has the very real potential of dissuading otherwise generous individuals from engaging in voluntary support of community vitality.

Surely there is a better way to raise any issues that would benefit from further clarification than to start by casting a wide net of aspersions on both the individuals and institutions that are dedicated to community philanthropy.

And surely it would be better for the process to start with a much more discerning understanding of philanthropy's structures, motivations and distinctions before rushing to advocate one-size-fits-all legislation.

I hope that you would encourage Assembly Member Wicks to pause on this legislative track and instead use the opportunity to engage in a much more thoroughgoing discussion of the issues.

I'm confident that my state and national colleagues would welcome with full candor the chance to clarify the dynamics and contributions of this complicated but fascinating enterprise known as community philanthropy.

Please don't hesitate to call if you'd like to discuss directly. My direct line is 415.464.2508.

With best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Peters', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas Peters, Ph.D.