



July 29, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5050  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1094 (Arambula) Sexual orientation and gender identity data collection pilot project  
– Support**

Dear Chairman Portantino,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write in support of AB 1094 (Arambula), which would create a data collection program to track violent deaths among the LGBTQ community.

According to the CDC, more than seven people per hour die a violent death in the United States. More than 18,800 people were victims of homicide, and over 48,000 people died by suicide in 2018 alone. Data on violent deaths can be used to best direct resources to local public health entities and non-profit violence prevention programs. Unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding about the relationship between the risk of violent death and an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI).

According to a UCLA study, an estimated 5.3% of the overall adult Californian population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ).<sup>1</sup> Currently, no US jurisdiction or agency routinely or systematically collects information about individuals' SOGI at the time of death—the information we do have is collected by journalists.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike veteran status or ethnicity, data collection around sexual orientation is not required to be recorded, and gender identity is only captured in special circumstances. By training coroners and medical examiners on how to gather mortality data with regard to SOGI, researchers and policymakers can begin to understand how orientations and identities are uniquely impacted in the LGBTQ community as well as how to allocate resources that will reduce the number of preventable deaths.

AB 1094 would create a three-year pilot program for the collection of SOGI data in violent death cases by coroners and medical examiners with up to six counties participating. The bill will also mandate that there must be county participation in the north, south, and central regions of the State and training on collecting this specific data to be reported to the California Department of Public Health. This program will capture necessary data to deploy resources that may prevent future deaths to members of the LGBTQ community.

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[2020 was the deadliest year on record for transgender people in the US](#), with the majority of those deaths being black transgender individuals. Additionally, transgender and other LGBT+ individuals are at heightened risk of discrimination and violence, with resulting poorer mental health outcomes, including higher rates of suicide. AB 1094 will allow us to gather data in order to prevent further deaths and improve the safety of our California communities. As this bill will be the first of its kind in the nation, AB 1094 is supported by leading national mental health and suicide prevention organizations, including the American Psychiatric Association and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

For these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists supports AB 1094 and would like to urge your aye vote on this measure.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Yoder  
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula

<sup>1</sup> [UCLA Adult LGBT Population in the United States](#)

<sup>2</sup> [AJPB Collecting SOGI Information at Death](#)