

**United Policyholders**

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www.uphelp.org

April 16, 2015

Hon. Tom Daly
Chair, Assembly Insurance Committee
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849,
Sacramento, CA 94249

Re: AB 1440 – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblyman Daly,

We are writing to express our strong support for AB 1440 (Nazarian), a bill providing seismic retrofitting incentives for single-family homes and small buildings. It is essential that Californians protect their property and incentives to “harden homes” will encourage homeowners to take necessary steps to make their homes more damage-resistant.

Earthquakes are a serious and constant threat in California yet the damage it causes is not covered by a basic homeowners insurance policy. After disasters insurance funds are typically the number one source of aid that helps homeowners repair or rebuild their home. In California only 12% of homeowners have earthquake insurance due to the high cost and deductibles. This will leave a devastating gap for most homeowners since the maximum individual assistance grant issued by FEMA is \$32,000 to income-qualified recipients. And unfortunately, charitable help with construction after a disaster is generally in high demand and short in supply.

We guide homeowners who live in earthquake country that if they can afford it, the best way to protect their assets is by retrofitting, buying earthquake insurance, and setting aside funds to pay for repairs below the deductible. We believe that providing incentives to homeowners to retrofit in the form of monetary grants is good public policy.

About United Policyholders

“We” are United Policyholders (“UP”), a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization founded in California in 1991 that is a voice and an information resource for insurance consumers in all 50 states. Donations, foundation grants and volunteer attorneys and staff, support the organization’s work. UP is based in San Francisco but operates nationwide. UP does not sell insurance or accept funding from insurance companies.

UP’s work is divided into three program areas: Roadmap to Recovery™ (disaster recovery and claim help), Roadmap to Preparedness (insurance and financial literacy and disaster preparedness), and Advocacy and Action (advancing pro-consumer laws and public policy through Amicus Briefs, legislative advocacy, and regulatory enforcement). UP hosts a library of previous Amicus Briefs, news, tips, sample forms and articles on commercial and personal lines insurance products, coverage, and the claims process at www.uphelp.org

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In addition to working with the California legislature on a variety of reforms to claims handling regulations and coverage matters, I served on a CEA Product Enhancement Advisory committee and have been appointed for six consecutive terms as an official consumer representative to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (“NAIC”), and work closely with the California Department of Insurance and Commissioner Dave Jones on a variety of important issues affecting insurance consumers in California.

In summary, we strongly support AB 1440 and the expansion of the “Brace + Bolt” program to ensure a more resilient California. Thank you for your time and consideration of AB 1440 and these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Bach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Amy Bach, Esq.
Executive Director