

## CONSENT CALENDAR

May 20, 2025

**Igor Tregub**, Councilmember District 4**Adena Ishii**, Mayor**Ben Bartlett**, Councilmember District 3

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Igor Tregub (Author), Mayor Adena Ishii (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: A resolution recognizing the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) community and urging support for Assembly Bill 91 — the “MENA Inclusion Act” (Harabedian).

**RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a resolution in support of California Assembly Bill 91, the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Inclusion Act<sup>1</sup> (Harabedian), to ensure accurate and equitable demographic data collection for MENA communities. This bill mandates the creation of distinct categories for MENA groups in official demographic data, starting on January 1, 2027.

**CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS**

The Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) community in California, one of the fastest-growing populations, is currently underrepresented in official demographic data. This lack of representation hinders the ability of state and local governments to effectively address the unique needs of MENA communities, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunity. Existing census methods do not account for the broad diversity within the MENA community, preventing policymakers from making informed decisions.

Assembly Bill 91, the "MENA Inclusion Act," will establish distinct categories for MENA groups in demographic data collected by state and local agencies, ensuring that MENA populations are properly represented. This will result in better-tailored policies, more

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<sup>1</sup> <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB91/id/3040032>

equitable distribution of resources, and a stronger voice for MENA communities in California.

### **FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Limited staff time is required to communicate the City's position to State representatives.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

### **CONTACT PERSON**

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### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 91. THE MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN (MENA) INCLUSION ACT — TO ENSURE ACCURATE REPRESENTATION AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RESOURCES FOR MENA COMMUNITIES**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Berkeley is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and just community that values the contributions of all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, or cultural background; and

**WHEREAS**, Berkeley has long been a leader in championing civil rights, human rights, and progressive public policy that uplifts historically marginalized communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) community has deep and historic roots in California and in the Bay Area, and contributes significantly to the cultural, economic, educational, and civic fabric of Berkeley; and

**WHEREAS**, this misclassification has profound consequences: MENA communities are unable to access culturally and linguistically appropriate services, are often excluded from funding and programming opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill 91 — the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Inclusion Act, seeks to remedy this disparity by requiring state agencies, local governments, and educational institutions to include a distinct MENA data category in demographic data collection, effective January 1, 2027; and

**WHEREAS**, this change will also enable educational institutions in Berkeley and beyond to more effectively address disparities in resource access for students who identify as MENA, promoting greater equity; and

**WHEREAS**, supporting AB 91 reflects the City of Berkeley's deep-rooted commitment to racial justice, equity, and inclusive governance, continuing a legacy of championing underrepresented communities and ensuring that public policy is shaped by accurate, community-centered data; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of Berkeley formally supports Assembly Bill 91, the MENA Inclusion Act, and affirms the importance of accurately collecting and disaggregating demographic data to ensure equity and inclusion for MENA communities across California; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Council of Berkeley urges the California State Legislature and Governor Gavin Newsom to pass and sign AB 91 into law; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Clerk shall send copies of this resolution to Governor Gavin Newsom, , State Senator Jesse Arreguín, and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks and John Harabedian.