



## OFFICE OF ASSEMBLYMEMBER

**Marc Levine**

TENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

### **AB 2539- Promoting Model Workplace Safety and Healthy Images**

#### **SUMMARY**

AB 2539 takes much needed steps toward protecting the health and well-being of models and will also change the messages the fashion industry sends to society about health and beauty.

This bill provides that the models are employees and receive all worker protections of employees. The bill further requires the adoption of health guidelines for models.

#### **EXISTING LAW/BACKGROUND**

Professional fashion models face pervasive and hazardous occupational demands to maintain extreme and unhealthy thinness. These occupational pressures create a dangerous work environment.

Studies indicates that as many as 40% of models may currently be suffering from some kind of eating disorder. Anecdotally, models have shared stories being told by modeling agencies to take life-threatening steps to stay thin including eating only one rice cake a day. Some models will eat tissue or cotton balls soaked in orange to mask the hunger pangs.

The fashion industry's idea of beauty is extreme and without workplace health and safety standards. Without protections like those proposed in this bill models will continue to be forced to sacrifice their health for their careers.

Further, the goal of the bill is to not only protect the health of the workers themselves, but also that of young people who emulate models and aspire to be models.

The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders reported that the media and model images have a tremendous influence on young people. The data indicates:

- The body type portrayed in advertising as the ideal is possessed naturally by only 5% of American females.
- 47% of girls in 5th-12th grade reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine pictures.
- 69% of girls in 5th-12th grade reported that magazine pictures influenced their idea of a perfect body shape.
- 42% of 1st-3rd grade girls want to be thinner.
- 81% of 10 year olds are afraid of being fat.

AB 2539 is part of a growing global movement to address models' workplace safety issues and related public health concerns.

France, Israel, Italy and Spain have all already taken similar steps to protect models' health.

## THIS BILL

More than ever, the media projects an unattainable standard of beauty that has an enormous influence on the way that all people, especially children, view themselves.

AB 2539 acknowledges that taking steps to protect models in the fashion industry will help promote healthy images.

Specifically, the bill seeks to ensure that models are not enduring physical harm as a workplace prerequisite by doing the following:

- Requiring that all modeling agencies be licensed with the Labor Commissioner.
- Clarifying that models are statutory employees.
- Requires the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board to adopt an occupational safety and health standard for models. The standards shall address issues, including but not limited to workplace safety, eating disorders, and sexual exploitation.

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## SUPPORT

### *Organizations:*

- *Academy for Eating Disorders*
- *California Labor Federation*
- *Eating Disorder Hope*
- *Eating Disorder Therapy LA*
- *Multi-Service Eating Disorder Association*
- *National Eating Disorders Association*
- *Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders*
- *The Model Alliance*

### *Individuals:*

- *Áine Campbell*
- *Michael Crook*
- *Kelsey Christian*
- *Nikki DuBose*