

April 14th, 2026

The Honorable Marc Berman
Assembly Business and Professions Committee
1020 N Street, Room 379
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1952 (Berman): Dentistry: dental hygienists: licensure - SPONSOR

Chair Berman:

The California Dental Association, representing 27,000 members throughout the state, is proud to sponsor AB 1952 (Berman), which would allow qualified internationally trained dentists (ITDs) to integrate themselves into the California dental team and increase linguistic and culturally diverse care across the state.

California dental practices continue to experience persistent difficulty hiring dental hygienists. While the total number of RDHs has increased modestly in recent years, workforce growth has not kept pace with the expanding dentist population. Even with additional RDH educational programs expected to open, projected graduate numbers will add only incremental capacity over time. As a result, many practices report unfilled hygiene positions, reduced appointment availability, and delayed preventive care.

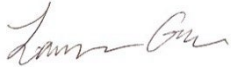
California has a substantial pool of ITDs whose clinical training, experience, and cultural and linguistic competencies remain underutilized. While six California dental schools have programs allowing ITDs to earn their dental license, these costly and competitive programs receive thousands of applicants each year for a small fraction of seats available. Despite meeting or exceeding the educational level of hygiene curriculum, ITDs currently have no pathway into the dental hygiene profession. As a result, highly trained clinicians are forced to restart their careers or exit the dental field entirely, even as dental practices report ongoing difficulty hiring hygienists across the state.

AB 1952 aims to resolve these issues by establishing a competency-based licensure track into dental hygiene. Applicants would be required to demonstrate that they have graduated from an academically equivalent dental program, pass national board and clinical examinations, and take CA-specific coursework that is reflective of the state's expansive RDH scope. ITDs that satisfy the criteria will then be eligible for a license under the Dental Hygiene Board of California. As the state continues to face a growing shortage of hygienists,

this bill creates an opportunity to maintain our existing dental licensure standards while addressing the workforce challenges our dental offices continue to face.

For these reasons, **CDA is proud to sponsor AB 1952 (Berman) and respectfully requests your AYE vote in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee.** If you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please contact me at Lawrence.gayden@cda.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence Gayden".

Lawrence Gayden
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members, Assembly Business and Professions Committee