



## Senator Angelique V. Ashby, 8<sup>th</sup> Senate District

### SB 456 – Community Beautification Act

*Supporting public art, protecting muralists, and expanding our creative economy*

#### SUMMARY

SB 456 creates a licensing exemption for muralists, which will allow them to continue to engage in commissioned work for public and private art without obtaining a contractor's license, as has been standard practice.

#### BACKGROUND

Murals are powerful tools for transforming neighborhoods and improving civic pride. Public art and murals are proven drivers of enhancing community and economic health, attracting tourists, supporting jobs, generating revenue, and improving public safety and well-being. For example, Sacramento's Wide Open Walls mural festival has brought over 200 murals to the city, sparking local pride and stimulating the creative economy.

However, current law has led to confusion regarding licensing requirements for muralists. In 2023, public notices began being issued to municipalities indicating that muralists fall within the definition of a "contractor" under Business and Professions Code Section 7026. Prior to those notices, state regulators interpreted the law to not cover muralists.

As a result, public agencies and private parties that commission a muralist must first ensure they carry a contractor's license if they undertake a mural for more than \$1000, even though historically this has not been standard practice for muralists.

#### THE PROBLEM

Due to these licensure requirements, cities across California have been instructing their public arts administrators to cease or stall the implementation of mural projects. This creates significant roadblocks for initiatives, like the State's Clean CA Program,

which seeks to beautify public spaces like highways, local roads, parks, and pathways.<sup>1</sup>

Requiring muralists to obtain a contractor's license imposes significant challenges. To qualify for these commercial licenses, muralists must accumulate four years of specialized experience under a licensed contractor, pass the Law and Business examination, and pay annual licensing fees.<sup>2</sup> These requirements not only create unnecessary barriers to work on public art projects, but also expose city employees and artists to fines if such requirements are not met.<sup>3</sup>

These licensure requirements violate the California Arts Preservation Act, which protects an artist's authorship rights and distinguishes the difference from commercial painting.<sup>4</sup> Painting walls for commercial or decorative purposes does not receive these same protections, furthering the distinction between muralists and commercial painters.

Murals are considered works of art, protected under federal copyright laws and are fundamentally different from construction projects.

#### THE SOLUTION

SB 456 clarifies standard practice of current law and adds "mural", narrowly defined, to the list of activities in the Business and Professions Code that are not subject to licensure.

Muralists provide a fundamentally different service than a painting contractor, as their work is an artistic expression, rather than addressing the structural integrity of a building. It is appropriate to provide a narrow exception to the state's licensing requirements for muralists, as SB 456 seeks to provide them with the statutory flexibility to continue their artistic expression.

<sup>1</sup> [Clean California](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Contractors State License Board](#)

<sup>3</sup> [California Business and Professions Code](#)

<sup>4</sup> [California Arts Preservation Act \(CAPA\)](#)

## **SUPPORT**

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California Arts Advocates (Co-sponsor)  
League of California Cities (Co-sponsor)  
1AMprojects - SF Mural Company  
A.B.O. Comix  
American Federation of Musicians, Local 7  
Armory Center for the Arts  
Arroyo Grande Public Art  
Art Lessons & Events  
Arts Benicia  
Arts Consortium  
Arts Council for Long Beach  
Arts Council of Mendocino County  
Arts Council of Placer County  
Arts Council Santa Cruz County  
Arts for a Better Bay Area  
Arts for LA  
Arts Orange County  
Arts4mMC  
Atrium 916 Creative Innovation Center for Sustainability  
Atthowe Fine Arts Services  
Badger Branding  
Bardola  
Beautify Earth  
Blue Line Arts  
California Association of Museums  
California Desert Arts Council  
California Outdoor Hospitality Association  
California Public Art Administrators  
California Travel Association  
Californians for the Arts  
Calle 24 Latino Cultural District  
Cannabis Travel Authority  
Casa 0101  
CasaQ  
Celebration Theatre  
City and County of San Francisco  
City Garage  
City of Albany  
City of Beaumont  
City of Bell Gardens  
City of Belmont  
City of Buena Park  
City of Covina  
City of Culver City  
City of Escondido  
City of Fullerton  
City of Glendale  
City of Lafayette  
City of Laguna Beach

City of Milpitas  
City of Moorpark  
City of Morgan Hill  
City of Mountain View  
City of Norwalk  
City of Oakland  
City of Palo Alto  
City of Point Arena  
City of Rancho Cordova  
City of Redwood City  
City of Riverside  
City of Sacramento  
City of San Jose  
City of San Luis Obispo  
City of Santa Monica  
City of Simi Valley  
City of South San Francisco  
City of Stockton  
City of Thousand Oaks  
City of Tustin  
City of Vista  
Community Rejuvenation Project  
Creative Sonoma  
DSTL Arts  
EQUALdotBRACKET  
Family Resource Center  
Holistic Honu Wellness Center  
Honeygirl Signs & Designs  
Ink Dwell  
Jaya King Inc.  
Jumbo Jibbles  
Junior Center Of Art and Science  
Kim Maxwell Studio  
L Start Murals  
Levitt Pavilion Los Angeles  
Little Hill Real Estate  
Marin Society of Artists  
Mixed Media Mosaic Artist As Meraki Art  
Museum of African American Art  
Music Changing Lives  
National Independent Venue Association of California  
New Canon Theatre  
Orange County Business Council  
Performing Arts Center Corp  
Plumas Arts  
Pogo Park  
Public Art  
Riverside Arts Council  
San Benito County Arts Council

San Diego Art Directory  
San Diego Art Matters  
Sara Daleiden Consulting  
Shadowlight Productions  
Sustainable Holistic Healing Arts & Activations  
SLATE Art Consulting  
Spike Island  
St. Bonaventure High School  
Stein's Hollow  
Stockton Art League  
SVCreates  
Tahoe Art League  
The Center for Cultural Power  
The Museum of the San Fernando Valley  
The TOaG Quartet  
The Unity Council  
Visit California  
Voices of the Community  
West End Arts District  
White Hall Arts Academy

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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