



CALIFORNIA

DATE: March 15, 2017
TO: **Honorable Marie Waldron**
FROM: Ken DeVore, Legislative Director
RE: **AB 478 (Waldron): Free Fishing for Minors
SUPPORT**

The National Federation of Independent Business (**NFIB**) is pleased to **support AB 478**, which aims to increase fishing participation among California's youth by increasing the eligibility to fish for free to 18 years of age – current law is up to 16.

Recreational fishing in California contributes over \$4.6 billion in economic activity each year, supporting small businesses, jobs, and generating tax revenue for communities dependent on outdoor tourism and recreation.

Recreational fishing's economic contribution to California is seriously threatened by an alarming decline in its fishing participation rate, that is also reflected by an unprecedented decline in fishing license sales. Annual fishing license sales have declined over 55% since 1980, and today, California's fishing participation rate ranks dead last (per capita) in the nation. This is remarkable given that California has one of the nation's longest coastlines, and tens of thousands of lakes, rivers, and streams.

This bill can slow this disturbing trend by making it less costly to introduce California's youth to the joys of fishing. Studies conclude that over 70 percent of anglers learned to fish during their youth, many of whom become lifelong anglers. By encouraging this healthy outdoor sport among youth, the State will gain new lifelong anglers, and consequently, more future revenues from licenses and sales taxes generated by the numerous businesses that sell fishing tackle and gear.

We thank you for introducing AB 478, and encourage the Legislature to pass this measure.

NFIB, the voice of California small business, represents the consensus views of its 22,000 members.