To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Kriss Worthington and Max Anderson
Subject: Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act

RECOMMENDATION
Send a letter urging Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico to support AB 1931, the renewal bill for the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act.

BACKGROUND
In California alone, over half a million people live with paralysis that is due to a neurological injury or illness. California’s Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act 1999 has significantly advanced progress toward the alleviation and eventual cure of paralysis.

Results have been extraordinary. The Roman Reed Act provided the first state-funded embryonic stem cell research in America, Dr. Hans Keirstead’s paralysis work with oligodendrocytes. This study was picked up by Geron Corporation and may reach human trials this Fall, the world’s first.

Additionally, researchers funded by this program have published 175 peer-reviewed scientific papers, sharing their findings in areas such as: prevention of further damage after the injury, innovative rehabilitation techniques, implantation of biological bridges for new nerves to connect across, restoring bowel and bladder function, pain control, robotics for assessment and training, the development of new and humane animal models, and much more.

This act has, to date, spent $14 million dollars on research to try and cure paralysis—and it has also brought economic benefits to the state of California. In fact, thanks to federal contributions and other sources, these funds have been leveraged into generating $60 million for the research. This is nearly a four-fold increase.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
None.

CONTACT PERSON
Councilmember Kriss Worthington 510-981-7170
Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico  
California State Assembly, State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for AB 1931 Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act

Dear Majority Leader Torrico

The Berkeley City Council wants to express our support for AB 1931, the renewal bill for the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act, which was enacted in 2000.

This act has, to date, spent $14 million dollars on research to try and cure paralysis—and it has also brought economic benefits to the state of California. In fact, thanks to federal contributions and other sources, these funds have been leveraged into generating $60 million for the research. This is nearly a four-fold increase.

In California alone, over half a million people live with paralysis that is due to a neurological injury or illness. And of course, in the entire nation and other nations of the world, that number expands to tens of millions of afflicted persons who might one day be the beneficiaries of this research.

Scientists helped by Roman Reed research grants have made major contribution to our knowledge about spinal cord injuries. They haven’t yet come up with a cure, but they are working on it, and they need our on-going support. The Roman Reed Lab has helped new scientists get started, and assisted experienced researchers. We’ve seen some exciting and promising discoveries – for example, laboratory rats so badly paralyzed they could only drag themselves before, are scampering now, thanks to this research. This kind of work will one day make it possible for those with spinal cord injuries to stand up and walk again.

This humanitarian bill helps California and the world; it deserves the support of us all.

Thank you,