



CITY OF SANTA ANA

Councilmember-Requested Item Report

DATE

June 17, 2025

TOPIC

City Council Resolution in Support of the MENA Inclusion Act (AB 91)

COUNCILMEMBER-REQUESTED ITEM TITLE

Discuss and Consider Providing Direction to the City Manager to Draft a Resolution in Support of the MENA Inclusion Act (AB 91)

DISCUSSION

The MENA Inclusion Act will require that starting January 1, 2026, state agencies, boards, and commissions in California that collect demographic data on ancestry or ethnic origin must include separate categories for Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) groups. This ensures that the state can more accurately meet the needs of the MENA community.

According to 2020 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, California is home to approximately 740,219 individuals who identify as Middle Eastern or North African (MENA). However, people from the MENA region are currently categorized under the broader "white" category in both federal and state data collection. When disaggregated, MENA individuals account for just 12% of the broader white population in California, resulting in their underrepresentation within the larger white category.

Additionally, Orange County, which includes Santa Ana, is home to a large population of approximately 100,000 MENA community members, with the majority being of Arab or Iranian descent.

Broadly classifying individuals from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) community as "white" in both the U.S. Census and California State data collection fails to capture the unique demographic characteristics, cultural diversity, and specific needs of the MENA population.

Recognizing this population separately would enable both public and private sectors to more effectively meet the needs of MENA residents, ensuring better representation, equitable distribution of resources, and more inclusive planning for community services and infrastructure.

SUBMITTED BY

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