

April 9, 2008

Honorable Jose Solorio
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
Capitol Building, Room 2196
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2172 (Cook) – SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Dear Assembly Member Solorio:

Protection & Advocacy, Inc. (PAI), a non-profit advocacy organization mandated to advance the human and legal rights of people with disabilities, will support AB 2172 if it is amended. This bill is set to be heard in the Assembly Public Safety Committee on April 15, 2008.

AB 2172 requires the Department of Justice to develop a publicly accessible web site, which will make information available about persons convicted of specified crimes against elders or dependent adults. The Department of Justice (DOJ) is required to work with the Department of Aging, law enforcement, and child protective services to provide access and search functions.

PAI supports enhanced protections for people with disabilities. AB 2172 will allow people with disabilities, family members, and advocates to be better informed about potential perpetrators. However, the bill is unnecessarily narrow in the scope of stakeholders that the DOJ is required to work with when administering the registry. The bill is too narrow in who it will allow to access special search functions as well.

PAI asserts, to have a more effective registry, it is important to seek input from, and give access to, a wide variety of stakeholders, including people with disabilities, who would be directly affected by the bill.

AB 2172 is similar to AB 1983, a bill authored by Assembly Member Evans and

sponsored by the REACH Coalition. AB 1983 includes a more comprehensive list of stakeholders who would consult with the Department of Developmental Services, the department responsible for administering the bill's registry. To create a better registry, PAI suggests AB 2172 be amended to include a similar list of stakeholders.

Stakeholders should include:

representatives from regional centers, providers of services to persons with developmental disabilities, state and local law enforcement agencies, district attorneys, representatives of county child protective services and adult protective services agencies, the Office of the Attorney General, the state long-term care ombudsperson, Protection and Advocacy, Inc. and other advocates for persons with disabilities, the REACH Coalition, consumers, families of persons with developmental disabilities, licensing agencies, the State Department of Developmental Services, the State Department of Social Services, the California Department of Aging, the State Department of Mental Health, and civil rights organizations.

Likewise, to increase the registry's impact, AB 2172 should expand the list of stakeholders that would have special access, including search functions. AB 2172 should be amended to include a list similar to the list in AB 1983, as seen above.

PAI will support this bill if the aforementioned amendments are taken. Thank you for considering our opinion on this worthwhile legislation. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss our position on this bill.

Cordially,



Brandon Tartaglia
Protection & Advocacy, Inc.
Legislative Advocate

CC: Honorable Members of the Assembly Public Safety Committee
CC: Honorable Paul Cook, Author, California State Assembly
CC: Kimberly Horiuchi, Counsel, Assembly Public Safety Committee
CC: John Sobel, Legislative Director, Assembly Member Cook's office