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Advancing the rights of Californians with disabilities

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**California disability rights advocates join forces against budget cuts at “Respect-Ability” conference, March**

Disability rights specialists, self-advocates, law and policymakers, educators, service providers and allies from other social justice groups are meeting to develop a joint advocacy agenda at the third Respect-Ability conference, taking place March 7-8 at the LAX Marriott.

As looming budget cuts threaten drastic reductions in vital programs for Californians with disabilities, this conference offers a unique opportunity to assess the best strategies and actions to lessen the impact of the cuts on already fragile lives. The purpose of the Respect-Ability coalition is to bring together representatives of the grassroots and leadership of the various disability groups to determine an effective common agenda.

The registration deadline is February 27 and details are available online: [www.respectabilitycoalition.org](http://www.respectabilitycoalition.org) to request accessible rooms at the LAX Marriott, phone 310.337.5341; other room registration, 800.228.9290.

**Program highlights**

Policymakers from Washington, D.C. and Sacramento will give keynotes about models of best practices: Ollie Cantos, Special Counsel, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice; Mike Collins, Executive Director, National Council on Disability; Tony Sauer, Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation; and Phyllis Cheng, Director of the California Department of Fair Employment & Housing. The conference will feature 28 workshops following seven tracks: health care, housing, employment, leadership development, coalition building and community empowerment, equal access and communication and media. Opening and closing sessions will develop a cross-disability, cross-disciplinary state advocacy plan.

The conference is sponsored by Kaiser Permanente; Edison International; Los Angeles Care Health Plan; California Endowment; Inland Empire Health Plan; Disability Rights Legal Center; Protection & Advocacy, Inc.; DBTAC Pacific ADA Center; Vineyard Bank; California State Independent Living Council; State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Total Recall Realtime Captioning; United Domestic Works; and Ability Magazine, media sponsor.