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June 1, 2021

Honorable Bill Dodd
Chair, Governmental Organization
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2082
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1291 (FRAZIER) as introduced February 19, 2021 SUPPORT

Dear Senator Dodd:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 1291**, which would require a state body, when it limits time for public comment, to provide at least twice the allotted time to a member of the public who utilizes translating technology to address the state body. AB 1291 will help ensure that people with disabilities and limited English proficient speakers can better exercise their right to civically engage in public forums and meetings.

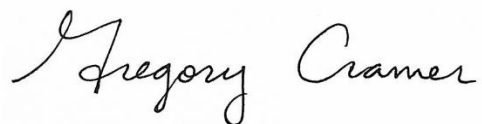
CIPC was founded in response to the 1996 passage of federal immigration and welfare laws that profoundly affected immigrants. Today, we advance inclusive policies that build a prosperous future for all Californians, using policy analysis, advocacy and capacity building. CIPC has led immigrant integration and inclusion initiatives to establish the One California state-funded program which provides funding for legal service providers throughout the state, the California Director of Immigrant Integration position, and advance economic opportunities by ensuring equitable access for services for California's immigrants.

DRC believes this bill will assist people who use assistive technology

including speech recognition technology and dictation software. Even when used proficiently, users may experience delays and errors in effectively articulating the thoughts they wish to convey to state bodies. By providing additional time for public comment, we believe this bill provides a reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities. Currently, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requires that meetings of a state body be open and public and that all persons be permitted to attend, with certain exceptions. Existing law provides that, subject to certain exceptions, the state body shall provide members of the public an opportunity to directly address the state body on agenda items. With California having one of the country's most diverse populations and being home to the nation's largest limited English proficient (LEP) population, AB 1291 will allow all Californians, particularly those who are limited English proficient, to meaningfully participate in and have equitable access to these public meetings. The state has close to 7 million residents who primarily speak one of over 200 non-English languages.

For these reasons, DRC supports this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory Cramer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gregory Cramer
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Governmental Organization
Honorable Jim Frazier, California State Assembly
Marc Engstrom, Legislative Director, Office of Assemblymember
Frazier