



**LEGISLATION &  
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**  
1831 K Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811-4114  
Tel: (916) 504-5800  
TTY: (800) 719-5798  
Intake Line: (800) 776-5746  
Fax: (916) 504-5807  
[www.disabilityrightsca.org](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org)

---

June 14, 2021

Honorable Richard Pan  
Chair, Senate Health Committee  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 2191  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 279 (MURATSUCHI) as amended June 8, 2021 SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Pan:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 279**. This bill is scheduled to be heard before Senate Health Committee.

For decades, one of the most serious threats facing residents of California's Skilled Nursing facilities ("SNFs") and Intermediate Care Facilities ("ICF"s) has been the trauma of forced involuntary transfer to locations away from friends, families, and advocates.

California and federal law give residents and their families the right to participate in the selection of any new home before transfer, and require adequate notice and the opportunity for an appeal. Nevertheless, these laws are routinely ignored by facility owners, even during the current state of emergency.

Indeed, these legal protections have not slowed the rate at which facilities are involuntarily transferring and discharging vulnerable and elderly residents during California's state of emergency without even giving residents the opportunity to visit new facilities first to assess their safety.

This is the danger facing residents of Sakura Gardens, one of the last California facilities to give Japanese-speaking residents a secure home in their old age. Last September, the new owner of Sakura Gardens, the for-profit Pacifica Companies, submitted a proposal to the City of Los Angeles to turn the facility into an apartment building. To facilitate this conversion, Sakura Gardens' current residents are being urged to transfer to facilities with shockingly high rates of COVID-19 infection—sight unseen.

Assemblyman Muratsuchi's bill would prohibit the owner of an ICF or SNF from involuntarily transferring a resident to another facility, during any declared state of emergency relating to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), except if the owner files for bankruptcy. For one year from the time all emergency declarations are lifted, owners would be obliged to provide a six month notice of closure. By supporting the bill, you will be protecting not only the residents of Sakura Gardens, but vulnerable long-term care residents across the state during the worst public health crisis in a century.

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 "Sawait Seyoum". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sawait Seyoum  
Senior Legislative Advocate  
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Health Committee  
Honorable Al Muratsuchi, California State Assembly  
Voleck Taing, Legislative Director, Office of Assemblymember  
Muratsuchi