



**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

June 30, 2021

Honorable Melissa Hurtado
Chair, Human Services
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 4032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 366 (RUBIO) as amended June 29, 2021 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hurtado:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 366**. This bill is scheduled for hearing before Senate Human Services committee on July 6, 2021.

Disability Rights California (DRC) is the agency designated under federal law to protect and advocate for the rights of Californians with disabilities. We work in litigation, legal representation, advocacy services, investigations, public policy, and provide information, advice, referral, and community outreach. For more than 40 years, DRC has worked to advance the rights of Californians with disabilities in education, employment, independence, health, and safety, and has grown into the largest disability rights organization in the nation.

DRC works for a world where all disabled people have power and are treated with dignity and respect. In this world, people with disabilities are supported, valued, included in their communities, afforded the same opportunities as people without disabilities, and make their own decisions.

Current California law provides that children who are removed from their parents because of abuse or neglect must be placed with siblings unless it is detrimental. In practice, however, far too many children are separated from their siblings due to bureaucratic hurdles that are not related to child safety. Children experience severe detrimental effects when they are placed into different homes because of capacity restrictions in the law – often times with limited or no visitation. Not only does this create more trauma and loss at the outset of the case, but it can have life-long consequences depending on the permanency outcome of the case. Keeping siblings connected is one of the most critical responsibilities of the child welfare system. Studies have shown that children in foster care achieve better outcomes and form life-long supportive relationships when placed together in the same home as their siblings. Studies have also shown that living with a caring relative greatly increases the likelihood of siblings residing together, especially for large sibling sets.

As amended, AB 366 would strengthen the statutory protections that keep siblings together by specifying that an approved resource family shall be presumed to have the size and space to place siblings together unless there is a safety risk.

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, appearing to read "Eric Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "E" and "H".

Eric Harris
Director of Public Policy
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Human Services
Honorable Blanca Rubio, California State Assembly
Daniel Folwarkow, Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member
Rubio