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June 10, 2019

Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Public Safety Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 189 (Kamlager-Dove) as amended May 7, 2019 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Skinner:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 189**. This bill is scheduled for hearing before the Senate Public Safety Committee on June 18, 2019.

This bill would add qualified autism service providers, qualified autism service professionals, and qualified autism service paraprofessionals, as defined, to the list of individuals who are mandated reporters. By imposing the reporting requirements on a new class of persons, for whom failure to report specified conduct is a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

Children with autism spectrum disorders are significantly more likely than typically developing children to be the victims of abuse, which encompasses emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

Mandated reporters are individuals who are required by law to report known or suspected child maltreatment. These individuals include a peace officer, a teacher, a physician, surgeon, a psychiatrist, among others. Qualified Autism Service Practitioners are not explicitly stated under the

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act. Studies have suggested that individuals with developmental disabilities are at a much higher level of risk of abuse than their peers.

Mandated reporters are in place to help end possible abuse or neglect at the earliest stage. If qualified autism service providers, qualified autism service professionals and qualified autism service paraprofessionals, as defined, were added to the list of mandated reporters, this would help protect children on the autism spectrum from abuse and neglect.

For these reasons, DRC supports AB 189. 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
Legislative Advocate 2
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Public Safety Committee
Mary Kennedy, Chief Counsel, Senate Public Safety Committee
Honorable Sydney Kamlager-Dove, California State Assembly
Howard Quan, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member
Kamlager-Dove
Eric Csizmar, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Committee