



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC  
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June 5, 2018

Honorable Jim Beall  
Chair, Transportation and Housing Committee  
California State Senate  
Capitol Building, Room 2082  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2132 (LEVINE) as amended April 16, 2018 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Beall:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities **supports AB 2132** with proposed Committee amendments. This bill is scheduled in the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee on June 12, 2018.

In its current form, this bill would authorize cities and counties to waive or reduce all building permit fees for improvements to the home of a person at least 60 years of age with a qualifying physical disability that are made to accommodate that disability as defined in the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (CFEHA). With the proposed Committee amendment to the bill, the benefits of the bill will be extended to persons who have mental disabilities as well as those who have physical disabilities.

In general, home modifications promote appealing, supportive, accessible, and inclusive living environments. These are considered barrier-free, giving those with impairment increased mobility and self-sufficiency. Modifications are often structural, including wider door openings, lowered cabinetry, wheelchair-friendly appliance loading levels, ramps, chair lifts, elevators and wheelchair friendly showers. Home modifications can also include minor adaptations, like grip-friendly doors, knobs, switches, flooring,

lighting, safety and security features. AB 2132 concerns those modifications that require a building permit.

While modifications are perhaps more often intended to accommodate physical disabilities, there can also be a need for modifications to accommodate individuals with psychological or intellectual disabilities. For example, as we have heard from our clients, an individual with major or mild neurocognitive disorder due to Alzheimer’s disease or traumatic brain injury, both mental impairments within DSM 5, may need barrier modifications to accommodate the disability such as fences, gates, or room restructuring to protect the individual with the disability. Likewise, individuals with developmental coordination disorder, also a mental impairment within DSM 5, which can be marked by falling, seizures, or other risks that can be minimized with accommodating modifications such as removal of steps, flooring, reconfiguring kitchens or bathrooms. Just as with modification for physical disabilities, the types of potential needed modifications can be quite extensive.

For many seniors with physical and mental disabilities, including the growing number of those with neurocognitive disorders and living on fixed incomes, the building permit fees for making accommodations may impose a financial burden and result in their inability to make the accommodations. This bill should equally alleviate part of the burden of making accommodations regardless of the type of disability.

For these reasons, DRC supports this bill with the Committee amendments clarifying that a “qualifying disability” includes both physical and mental disabilities. We appreciate the author bringing it forward. 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 "Curtis Child". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" and last name "Child" clearly distinguishable.

Curtis Child  
Legislative Director  
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Marc Levine, California State Assembly  
Diego Lopez, Office Assistant, Office of Assembly Member Levine  
Honorable Members, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee  
Erin Riches, Principal Consultant, Senate Transportation and  
Housing Committee  
Doug Yoakam, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus  
Committee