



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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March 5, 2019

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
Assembly Education Committee
Capitol Building, Room 4001
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 236 (GARCIA) – as introduced January 18, 2019 – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports AB 236. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Education Committee on March 13, 2019.

This bill would support the critical work of family empowerment centers (FECs), by helping families navigate the complex special education system, assisting parents in understanding their children's disabilities, and facilitating the formation of peer-support communities. The bill would also increase FECs base grant size from \$150,000 to \$237,000, expand the number of centers throughout the state, and improve coordination between FECs and California Department of Education.

In 2001, the Legislature established FECs to help families of children and young adults with disabilities, ages 3-22, obtain supportive services. Importantly, these centers promote inclusive educational opportunities. Although original statutes call for the establishment of 32 centers throughout the state, there are only 14 centers and many high need areas lack access to special need services. In addition, funding levels have not changed since 2001, resulting in a funding stream that has not kept pace with increasing demand for FEC services or cost-of-living increases.

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.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis Child". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Curtis Child
Legislative Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Education Committee
Tanya Lieberman, Chief Consultant, Assembly Education Committee
The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, California State Assembly
Lina Malova, Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member Garcia
Robert Becker, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus