



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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May 22, 2018

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Appropriations Committee
California State Assembly
Capitol Building, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2605 (GIPSON) as amended April 30, 2018 – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Gonzalez Fletcher:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 2605**. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 23, 2018.

Among other provisions, AB 2605 requires group homes, short-term residential therapeutic program, transitional shelter care facilities or temporary shelter care facilities, to develop protocols dictating the instances in which law enforcement may be contacted in response to the behavior of a youth residing at the facility. The measure requires the protocols to do at least all of the following: 1) employ trauma-informed and evidence-based de-escalation and intervention techniques when staff responds to a youth's behavior; 2) require staff to undergo annual training on the facility's protocols; 3) specify that contacting law enforcement is only used as a last resort once all other de-escalation and intervention techniques have been exhausted, and only upon approval of a staff supervisor; and 4) address contacting law enforcement in an emergency situation if there is an immediate risk of serious harm to a child or others. Finally, the bill requires these facilities to include the protocols developed in its emergency intervention plan and its plan of operation.

Often times, children in foster care have a history of trauma and abuse. Some youth in foster care have disabilities where the challenging behavior is a manifestation of their disability. For children with disabilities, the better approach should focus on proper behavior management techniques, such as positive interventions to address disability-related behaviors rather than calling the police.

This measure seeks appropriate policy shift to implement systemic change and provide guidance through the development of specific protocols including protocols that advance trauma-informed evidenced-based de-escalation and intervention techniques. The protocols will also provide more clarity and dictate the instances in which law enforcement may be contacted in response to a youth's behavior. With additional clarity, there can be less reliance on law enforcement to manage behavioral issues in these facilities, which is often counterproductive and inappropriate.

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 cursive script, reading "Evelyn M. Abouhassan".

Evelyn Abouhassan
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Mike Gipson, California State Assembly
Deepen Gagneja, Caucus Consultant, Office of Assembly Member
Gipson
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Swenson, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations
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