



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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June 14, 2018

Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Education Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 5072
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2704 (O'DONNELL) as amended May 29, 2018 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen:


Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 2704**. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Education Committee on June 20, 2018.

As amended, AB 2704 requires establishment of new Family Empowerment Centers (FECs) with priority given to regions that currently lack a center; establishes increased funding levels awarded to each center; and establishes new requirements for data collection and reporting to improve coordination between the California Department of Education (CDE) and FECs.

More specifically, AB 2704 requires CDE, on or after January 1, 2019, to give priority to new FEC grant applicants from regions that currently lack a center; requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), no later than February 15, 2020, to determine additional criteria for prioritizing applicant, and increases the minimum base rate awarded to each center from \$150,000 to \$223,000, after a center has been established in all of the 32 regions created under the Early Start Resource Center Program. FEC's are a critical resource to the disability community. Among other responsibilities,

FEC's assist families to better: 1) understand the nature of their child's disability, including the educational and developmental needs; 2) communicate effectively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention, and related services; 3) understand the decision-making processes and the development of individualized education plans; and 4) obtain appropriate information regarding the range of options, programs, services and resources available. Because of the critical nature of the services FEC's provide the children with disabilities and their families, 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 Patrick O'Donnell, California State Assembly
Naomi Ondrasek, Fellow, Office of Assembly Member O'Donnell
Honorable Members, Senate Education Committee
Lynn Lorber, Chief Consultant, Senate Education Committee
Debbie Look, Senior Consultant, Assembly Education Committee
Roger Mackensen, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Committee