



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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June 29, 2018

Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Appropriations Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2704 (O'DONNELL) as amended June 26, 2018 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

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 Appropriations Committee on July 2, 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 applicants, 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. As amended on June 26, 2018, implementation of the measure is subject to an appropriation.

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 black ink, reading "Evelyn M. Abouhassan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Evelyn" and middle initial "M." clearly legible, followed by the last name "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 Appropriations Committee
Lenin Del Castillo, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Roger Mackensen, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Committee