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June 18, 2018

Honorable Richard Pan
Chair, Health Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2983 (ARAMBULA) as introduced – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Pan:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 2983**. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Health Committee on June 27, 2018.

This bill provides that hospitals, including stand-alone-psychiatric hospitals, may not require a person to be placed on a 5150 hold as a condition of accepting a patient transfer from an emergency department. People who seek and receive voluntary services are more likely to benefit from the services and have positive mental health outcomes.

When people with mental health disabilities are in crisis, they often seek care in the same way others with urgent health conditions do - they go to the nearest emergency department. Some come voluntarily to the emergency department seeking treatment, or are brought in by family members. After an evaluation by an emergency physician, some patients need additional psychiatric services and require transfer by ambulance to a psychiatric hospital to receive a higher level of mental health care.

Current practice places several barriers in the way of patients getting this care. A survey of California emergency physicians by the sponsors of the bill revealed that, almost universally, hospitals require patients to be on a 5150 hold or they will not accept transfer of that patient from the emergency department. There is no such mandate in law.

The Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS) was built upon furthering personal autonomy rights of all people with disabilities, and particularly the right to self-direction and self-determination. Requiring a 5150 hold on persons before accepting a transfer places an unnecessary barrier to care, does not exist for any other health care condition, removes a person's autonomy and unreasonably stigmatizes people with mental health disabilities who are voluntarily seeking treatment. AB 2983 is consistent with LPS and protects important rights of individuals.

For these reasons, DRC supports AB 2983. 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 fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" and last name "Child" clearly distinguishable.

Curtis Child
Legislative Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Joaquin Arambula, California State Assembly
Marla Cowan, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member
Arambula
Honorable Members, Senate Health Committee
Vincent Marchand, Principal Consultant, Senate Health Committee
Lara Flynn, Principal Consultant, Assembly Health Committee
Joe Parra, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus Committee
Elena Lopez Gusman, Executive Director, California ACEP
Tim Madden