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April 16, 2018

Honorable Blanca Rubio  
Chair, Human Services Committee  
California State Assembly  
Capitol Building, Room 5175  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 3006 (STONE) as amended on March 22, 2018 – SPONSOR  
AND SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Rubio:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, is proud to **sponsor and support AB 3006**. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Human Services Committee on April 24, 2018.

AB 3006 ensures equal access to services for deaf and hard of hearing families in the child welfare system. It requires each county to designate a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Coordinator to oversee and facilitate accommodations necessary to provide effective communications between county staff, entities, and all deaf and hard of hearing individuals and families receiving county provided child welfare services. The legislation also requires the California State Department of Social Services (CDSS) to have a statewide Deaf Services Manager carry out specified duties and to work with county coordinators to ensure statewide implementation of county coordinator responsibilities. Finally, the proposal establishes a working group made up of key stakeholders to consult on the role and responsibilities of the statewide Deaf Services Manager.


### **State and Federal Law:**

Federal law entitles individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to effective communication with state and local government agencies. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-12134, forbids discrimination by any public entity. Under the ADA and Section 504, local and state agencies and entities receiving federal funding are required to provide individualized treatment and a full and equal opportunity to benefit from and participate in their programs. 28 C.F.R. § 35.130. Services must be adapted to meet the unique needs of the parent or child with a disability to provide equal access. It applies to activities administered directly by state and local government agencies, and to activities carried out by state and local government contractors. In addition, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits the exclusion of any person because of their disability from the programs, services or activities of entities that receive federal funding. California Government Code Sections 11135 through 11139 and their implementing regulations, also prohibit discrimination on a broad range of protective categories, including disability. Implementing regulations require recipients of state funds, which includes counties, to provide communication services. See 2 CCR § 11190.

Even with these legal requirements, deaf and hard of hearing families receiving child welfare services are not consistently provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to the full range of child welfare programs, services, and activities as required by state and federal law. For example, they may not always receive a person that is fluent in American Sign Language or a person that is a Certified Deaf Interpreter in all child welfare programs. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to effectively participate in these programs or speak with designated staff. The risks from the lack of full participation are great. Deaf and hard of hearing families lose the supports and services needed to maintain a safe, intact family.

AB 3006 is critical as it ensures compliance with current law and makes sure that necessary accommodations are provided to deaf and hard of hearing families so that they can fully participate in child welfare programs and reunite with their children. For these reasons, DRC sponsors and supports this bill. We thank the author for his leadership on behalf of individuals with disabilities. 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 that reads "Evelyn M. Abouhassan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Evelyn Abouhassan  
Senior Legislative Advocate  
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Mark Stone, California State Assembly  
Nicole Hisatomi, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member  
Stone  
Honorable Members, Assembly Human Services Committee  
Daphne Hunt, Chief Consultant, Assembly Human Services  
Committee  
Kelsy Castillo, Senior Consultant, Assembly Human Services  
Committee  
Irene Frausto, Committee Secretary, Assembly Human Services  
Committee  
Alex Khan, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus Committee