



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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August 2, 2017

Honorable Ricardo Lara
Chair, Appropriations Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 322 (MULLIN) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lara:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports AB 322. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 21, 2017.

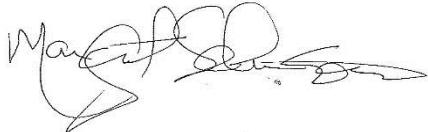
Current law requires public social services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing to be available in at least 3 regions throughout the state, including, complete communication services through interpreter services by a professional interpreter for the deaf and counseling. This bill, upon appropriation by the Legislature, would require the department to provide deaf access program services to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who reside in a linguistically isolated household.

This bill understands there is a steady increase of immigrants who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and live in a linguistically isolated household and who are often denied equal access to traditional healthcare, education, employment, and government services. Agencies that work with individuals who do not speak English and who are deaf or hard-of-hearing report the frustrations and multiple barriers these individuals face. These agencies report additional time is needed to provide services in the client's native

language, American Sign Language, and English interpretation. This bill ensures these individuals will receive access to services, upon appropriation by the Legislature.

For these reasons, we support this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position on this bill.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Margaret Johnson, Esq.
Advocacy Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Kevin Mullin, California State Assembly
Marina Espinoza, Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member Mullin
Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Debra Cooper, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee