



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC  
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March 24, 2017

Honorable Richard Bloom  
California State Assembly  
Capitol Building, Room 2003  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 411 (BLOOM) – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Bloom:

Disability Rights California, a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports AB 411.

Existing law authorizes prosecuting witnesses to have up to 2 persons of their choosing for support at the preliminary hearing and at trial, or at a juvenile court proceeding, during the testimony of the prosecuting witness. This bill would authorize these witnesses, as well as certain child witnesses, to be accompanied by a dog, trained in providing emotional support, while testifying.

We support allowing witnesses who need emotional support to have specially trained facility or therapy dogs to provide the support. Many witnesses with disabilities may need such support to testify. We appreciate that the author will add a provision indicating the bill does not apply to witnesses who use service animals for mental health or other disabilities.

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 stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret Johnson, Esq.  
Advocacy Director  
Disability Rights California

cc: Naeemah Charles, Fellow, Office of Assembly Member Bloom