



**LEGISLATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

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April 1, 2019

Honorable Patrick O'Donnell
Chair, Education Committee
California State Assembly
Capitol Building, Room 4001
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 895 (Muratsuchi) as introduced February 20, 2019 – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 895**. This bill is scheduled for hearing before the Assembly Education Committee on April 10, 2019.

This bill revises the School-Based Early Mental Health Intervention and Prevention Services for Children Act to award grants rather than matching grants, and would expand the definition of an eligible pupil to include a pupil who attends a preschool program at a contracting agency of the State preschool program or a local educational agency, and a pupil who is in transitional kindergarten.

Mental health illnesses that are not addressed early in life can have severe consequences, including increased difficulties at home, with peers, and in school, and youths with mental health problems are at a higher risk of dropping out of school and engaging in illegal substance use, criminal behavior, and other risk-taking behaviors. Early diagnoses and appropriate services for children and their families can make a difference in the lives of children with mental disorders. As noted in the legislative findings, only 59 percent of special education pupils graduated from high school within four

years in the 2010-11 fiscal year compared to 76 percent of all pupils and that far too often, youth with mental health challenges do not receive the services they need.

AB 895 will provide the opportunity to reach more children and earlier to address early mental health challenges. It also recognizes the need for local education agencies and community-based mental health providers to collaborate on the delivery of mental health services.

For these reasons, DRC supports this bill. 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 Members, Assembly Education Committee
Tanya Lieberman, Chief Consultant, Assembly Education Committee
Honorable Al Muratsuchi, California State Assembly
Bryan Singh, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member
Muratsuchi
Robert Becker, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus Committee