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March 6, 2019

Honorable Patrick O'Donnell  
Chair, Assembly Education Committee  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2196  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 8 (Chu) as amended March 4, 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 8**. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Education Committee on March 13, 2019.

This bill would require that every school have at least one mental health professional generally accessible to pupils during school hours on all elementary and secondary school campuses and establishes a ratio of one mental health professional per every 400 students. If the mental health professional is not employed by the school, the bill would require the school district or the county office of education to form a community partnership with, and enter into a memorandum of understanding with the entity that employs the mental health professional. It would also require a school to seek Medi-Cal reimbursement for any child eligible to receive the benefits.

Untreated mental illness increases a person's risk for suicide, involuntary emergency care, homelessness, poor clinical outcomes and early death. Clinical research demonstrates that 50 percent of all mental illness begins by the age of 14, and 75 percent by the age of 24. Thus, it is critical to

identify and treat youth for mental health illnesses and one of the best places to do that is in the schools.

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 Committees  
Debbie Look, Principal Consultant, Assembly Education Committee  
Assembly Member Kansen Chu  
Katelin Van Deynze, Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member  
Chu  
Robert Becker, Consultant, Republican Caucus Committee