



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
INFORMATION UNIT**

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March 14, 2017

Honorable Evan Low
California State Assembly
Capitol Building, Room 4126
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 973 (LOW) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Low:

Disability Rights California, a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports AB 973. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee on March 22, 2017.

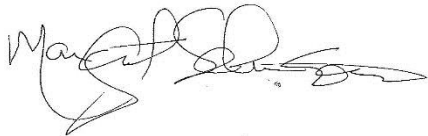
Existing law permits any voter, including a voter with a disability or a military or overseas voter, to apply for and receive a vote by mail ballot from his or her county elections official. This bill would require a county elections official to permit a voter with a disability, or a military or overseas voter, to cast his or her ballot using a certified remote accessible vote by mail system. This requirement would become operative one year after the date on which the Secretary of State certifies a remote accessible vote by mail system.

Vote by mail, while useful for some people with disabilities, is inaccessible to numbers of voters with disabilities, such as those who are blind, have manual dexterity disabilities or learning disabilities. As you know, paper ballots are not accessible to people with certain disabilities because they cannot read or mark the ballot unassisted, which means they cannot vote privately or independently as required by the federal Help America Vote Act. People with disabilities need alternatives to vote privately and

independently when paper ballots are not accessible to them, such as a remote accessible vote by mail system.

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: Gina Frisby, Capitol Director, Office of Assembly Member Low
Honorable Chair and Members, Assembly Elections and Redistricting
Committee
Nichole Becker, Principal Consultant, Assembly Elections and
Redistricting Committee