



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
INFORMATION UNIT**

1831 K Street
Sacramento, CA 95811-4114
Tel: (916) 504-5800
TTY: (800) 719-5798
Intake Line: (800) 776-5746
Fax: (916) 504-5807
www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org

June 20, 2017

Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson
Chair, Judiciary Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 2032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 976 (BERMAN) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Jackson:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports AB 976. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 27, 2017.

This bill expands the current statutory framework on electronic filing to several different case types, and moves the court toward a digital system that operates with less paper. Specifically, it expands permissive electronic filing and service process of court documents by clarifying rules about electronic filing and service relating to electronic signatures, timing, notice and transmission.

DRC supports the use of technology to both increase the efficiencies of government services and benefits but also to improve the accessibility of those services and benefits to persons with disabilities. We had expressed concern about whether the electronic filing technology and services are accessible to persons with disabilities. Federal and state law require that government agencies and their contractors ensure that accessibility be integrated into the design, development, testing and maintenance of websites and electronic and information technology to increase the ability

of all persons to use them. In this case it is a legal requirement that the electronic filing systems being directed by the Judicial Council and implemented by the state's courts be accessible to the public, attorneys, and other users of the system who have disabilities to the same extent as persons without disabilities.

Included as part of the 2017-18 budget passed by the Legislature last week are requirements for ensuring that electronic filing and document service systems comply with Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (AB 103 (Committee on the Budget), enrolled June 15, 2017). The Judicial Council must adopt Rules of Court implementing the new requirements and ensure that the courts and the electronic service providers (ESPs) comply with national website accessibility guidelines. Courts have two years to come into complete compliance and must report their compliance to the Judicial Council and the Legislature. In the meantime the ESPs are required to provide an accommodation to any individual with a disability who requests one if a systems is not presently accessible. The Judicial Council must submit four reports to the Legislature on its implementation progress.

Assuming the Governor signs AB 103, the Public Safety trailer bill, our concerns about accessibility of the electronic filing and document service process have been addressed. We appreciate the efforts of the Judicial Council to expand access to justice and ensure that the public, attorneys, and other court users with disabilities will have the same access to electronic filing services as persons without 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 "Curtis Child", written in a cursive style.

Curtis Child
Legislative Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Marc Berman, California State Assembly
Harry Ermoian, Chief of Staff, Office of Assembly Member Berman
Honorable Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Christian Kurpiewski, Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Eric Dang, Counsel, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Dan Pone, Judicial Council of California