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April 5, 2018

Honorable Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Budget Subcommittee #1
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5155
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: DEAF ACCESS PROGRAM (DAP) ONGOING FUNDING INCREASE
REQUEST – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Arambula:

Disability Rights California (DRC), the federally mandated protection and advocacy system that works to protect and advance the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports** the request for a \$4.1 million ongoing funding increase for the Deaf Access Program (DAP) from \$4.7 million included in the Governor's proposed budget to \$8.8 million. This augmentation will provide increased access to DAP services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. This budget issue is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1.

Currently, the state contracts with eight agencies in eight regions across the state to provide the following services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals:

- Communication Services
- Advocacy Services
- Job Development and Placement
- Information and Referral
- Counseling
- Independent Living Skills Instruction

- Community Education

However, as the population in need of DAP services continues to grow, resources for the DAP have diminished. Funding for the DAP reached \$5.8 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 1998-99. Since FY 2007-08, DAP agencies have lost a total of \$1.1 million in funding for the program – \$600,000 lost during the recession and another \$500,000 lost because of federal sequestration.

The \$4.1 million in additional ongoing funding would cover the unmet need created because of DAP agencies' loss of \$1.1 million in funding. It would also provide agencies with an additional \$3 million to serve approximately 120,000 Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals who live in linguistically isolated households. These linguistically isolated households are often denied equal access to traditional healthcare, education, employment, and government services because of the funding shortage.

For these reasons, DRC supports this budget request for additional funding. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,



Evelyn Abouhassan
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1
Nicole Vazquez, Deputy Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget
Subcommittee #1
Honorable Kevin Mullin, California State Assembly
Marina Espinoza, Legislative Aide, Office of Assembly Member Mullin