



**LEGISLATION AND
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May 28, 2019

Senator Holly J. Mitchell, Chair, Budget Conference Committee
Assembly Member Philip Ting, Vice Chair
Senator Jim Nielsen
Senator Richard D. Roth
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator John M.W. Moorlach
Assembly Member Kevin McCarty
Assembly Member Chad Mayes
Assembly Member Jay Obernolte
Assembly Member Shirley Weber

RE: Item 4440 - Department of State Hospitals (DSH) – State Minimum Wage

Dear Chair Mitchell, Vice Chair Ting, and Conferees:

Disability Rights California SUPPORTS the Senate Budget Committee action for the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) - State Minimum Wage TBL:

Item: 4440. Adopt placeholder trailer bill language consistent with the Administration's proposal and including additional language to prohibit DSH from sweeping patient funds to support housing and treatment costs.

The Senate Budget Committee took no action on the additional TBL to prohibit DSH from sweeping patient funds to support housing and treatment costs.

We applaud and appreciate the DSH's efforts to standardize wages for patient-workers and also increase the wages for many of the patient-

workers in the state hospital system. The department's Budget Change Proposal (BCP) proposes an exemption to state minimum wage laws for patient-workers, currently \$12.00 per hour, and proposes to pay them federal minimum wage, currently \$7.25 per hour. While the department's BCP makes significant progress toward increasing patient-worker's wages, we see no reason to exempt these workers from our state minimum wage. Both Budget Committees conformed on this action.

Additionally, the Senate's action prohibits DSH from sweeping patient funds to support housing and treatment costs. **We support the Senate action on this issue.** Currently, under Welfare and Institutions Code Section 7281, if patients have more than \$500 in their accounts, it can be taken to cover the cost of their care. With the higher wages under this proposal, the \$500 limit should be eliminated. The ability for patient-workers to retain additional funds in their accounts will allow them to be able to conserve funds that can be used for reentry needs when they leave the facility and reenter the community, and thereby serve to reduce recidivism.

We urge your support for adopting placeholder TBL consistent with the Administration's proposal and including additional language to prohibit DSH from sweeping patient funds to support housing and treatment costs.

Very truly yours,



Curtis Child
Legislative Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Christopher Woods, Senate Budget Director
Joe Stephenshaw, Senate Budget Staff Director
Scott Ogus, Senate Budget Consultant
Kirk Feely, Senate Republican Budget Director
Jason Sisney, Assembly Budget Director
Christian Griffith, Assembly Budget Chief Consultant
Andrea Margolis, Assembly Budget Consultant
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