



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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May 17, 2018

Honorable Philip Ting
Chair, Budget Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Budget Subcommittee #2
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2136
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Family Empowerment Centers Budget Request – Support

Dear Assembly Member Ting and Assembly Member McCarty:

Disability Rights California (DRC) is a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities. DRC respectfully requests that the Assembly Budget Committee increase the allocation of federal IDEA funds to Family Empowerment Centers (FECs), to expand and strengthen the role of the FEC network throughout the state.

FECs were established by the Legislature in 2001 to address the significant challenges parents face in obtaining services for their children with disabilities, and to reduce conflicts between parents and school districts. Funding levels have not changed since 2001, resulting in a funding stream that has not kept pace with increasing demand for FEC services or cost-of-living increases.

FEC's are a critical resource to the disability community. Among other responsibilities, FEC's assist families to better: 1) understand the nature of their child's disability, including the educational and developmental needs; 2) communicate effectively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention, and related services; 3) understand the decision-making processes and the development of individualized

education plans; and 4) obtain appropriate information regarding the range of options, programs, services and resources available.

Increased support for FECs would promote the critical work of these organizations and improve upon the FECs' ability to serve as a resource for statewide efforts to improve the lives of children with disabilities. Thank you for considering our request, and ensuring that families of children with disabilities have the support they need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evelyn M. Abouhassan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Evelyn Abouhassan
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2
Katie Hardeman, Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee