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April 7, 2021

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5097
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 17 (PAN) as amended April 5, 2021 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Umberg:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 17**. This bill is scheduled for hearing before Senate Judiciary Committee on April 13, 2021.

Inequity, and systematic institutionalized racism has been prevalent in American society for centuries. Native Americans and African Slaves were the first to experience American racism. Eventually, the Latinx and Asian and Pacific Islander Communities also experienced racism in America. People have experience racism through violence, aggressive behavior, and discrimination dating back to the periods before American independence.

These policies and practices have detrimentally impacted people of color. It is crucial that we look at these policies and fix them so that people of color can continue to grow and live their American dream.

Many people with disabilities are also people of color. Intersectionality is a

term coined by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.¹ The term describes how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics intersect with one another and overlap (Coaston). Identities can be complex and lead to additional challenges for individuals.

SB 17 would establish the Office of Race Equity and the Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council, which will oversee the new office. The goal of this office will be to help coordinate and lead the state's efforts to ensure that there is race equity across state agencies and departments.

The disability community listens to and works with diverse communities that represent a cross section of our state. For these reasons, DRC supports this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "E" and "H".

Eric Harris
Director of Public Policy
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Honorable Richard Pan, California State Senate
Kimberly Chen, Principal Consultant, Senate Health Committee
Morgan Branch, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

¹ [Intersectionality and Disability-Inclusive Development – Inclusive Sustainable Development \(disabilitydevelopment.com\)](https://disabilitydevelopment.com). November 9, 2020 [“Return to Main Document”](#)