



**LEGISLATION AND
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March 24, 2021

Honorable Melissa Hurtado
California State Senate
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 515 (PAN) – as introduced February 17, 2021 - STRONG
SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Hurtado:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 515** by Senator Richard Pan. The bill is scheduled for hearing before Senate Human Services Committee on April 6, 2021.

SB 515 continues the ongoing effort to move toward the development and implementation of a long-term support services benefit for California families that will address the unique needs of those in need of such services and relieve some of the financial burden associated with accessing these services.

California currently has almost 8 million persons who are either older adults or persons with mobility, sensory, intellectual/developmental, and/or mental health disabilities. This population will grow significantly over the next decade.

Long Term Supportive Services (LTSS) are not covered adequately by Medicare, and most Californians cannot afford to purchase private long-term care insurance. Paying out-of-pocket for LTSS is cost prohibitive for many and creates a significant financial and social burden for California

families. For individuals and families, the unanticipated costs can lead to impoverishment, lack of care options, and intense psychological stress. When informal networks of care are not available, individuals and families pay out-of-pocket for LTSS, purchasing services provided by home care aides, adult day services, assisted living communities, and nursing homes, to help fill the gap. But these services bring high costs, not only to the individuals directly involved, but also to taxpayers and the government as more individuals are forced to spend down assets to qualify for an overburdened Medi-Cal system.

California needs a new LTSS financing program that provides flexible benefits responsive to each person's unique needs. This program would preserve dignity, choice, and intentionality for individuals and families with service and support needs, and be linked to a new, sustainable funding source.

For these reasons, DRC strongly 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 that reads "Sawait Seyoum". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sawait Seyoum
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

CC Honorable Members, Senate Human Services
 Honorable Richard Pan, California State Senate
 Bernadette Sullivan, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Pan
 Joe Parra, Policy Consultant, Republican Caucus