



**LEGISLATION &  
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May 7, 2021

Honorable Anthony Portantino  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2206  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 562 (Portantino) as amended March 15, 2021 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Portantino:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 562**. This bill is scheduled for hearing before Senate Appropriations Committee on May 10, 2021.

DRC writes in support of SB 562. DRC works in this area to help people with intellectual/developmental disabilities live, work, and play where they choose. We understand the problems facing parents seeking the most appropriate treatment for their child with autism. All children are unique in the way autism impacts them and in the way they respond to therapy. It is essential to the healthy development of children that they receive the treatment best suited to them as prescribed by the medical professional that knows them best in consultation with the child's parents.

When the Legislature passed SB 946 in 2011, the definition for "Behavioral Health Treatment" was broadly defined to include all physician or psychologist prescribed evidence-based forms of therapy. Despite the best intentions of the Legislature, the law limited this in practice. Many children are denied the specific form of prescribed therapy they need by their insurance carrier.

Additionally, there is currently a six to twelve month waiting list for behavioral health services due to a shortage of qualified ABA and other evidence-based behavioral health treatment professionals within insurance company networks. SB 562 addresses that by eliminating some obstacles to qualified autism professionals and paraprofessionals to become network providers. SB 562 will allow parents the opportunity to receive insurance coverage for the physician and psychologist prescribed evidence-based behavioral health treatment that is the most appropriate for their child.

This bill is a step in the right direction for autistic children. We will continue to work with the author and his staff on future efforts to ensure that these children receive the treatment that they need.

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", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Harris  
Director of Public Policy  
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Ben Edelstein, Legislative Aide, Office of Senator Portantino