



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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April 16, 2018

Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Public Safety Committee
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1190 (SKINNER) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Skinner:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 1190**. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Public Safety Committee on April 17, 2018.

This bill would establish the Eugenics Sterilization Compensation Program, for the purpose of providing victim compensation to any survivor of state sponsored sterilization conducted pursuant to eugenics laws that existed in the State of California between 1909 and 1979. It would require an outreach effort to locate any qualified recipient and permit him or her to apply for victim compensation. The bill would appropriate an unspecified amount from the General Fund to the department for the purposes of paying victim compensation to qualified recipients and administering and implementing the program. In addition to the compensation, the bill would also require a traveling historical exhibit and other educational opportunities about eugenics laws that existed in the State of California between 1909 and 1979 and the far-reaching impact they had on California residents.

This bill will be the first effort to provide redress to people involuntarily sterilized under state eugenics laws. While the state acknowledged this

historical wrong in 2003, through Governor Davis' and Attorney General Lockyer's apologies and a Senate resolution, this bill will provide a material acknowledgement of this injustice by compensating sterilization survivors.

SB 1190 will also raise public awareness about this chapter in California's history through markers or plaques at designated sites and educational activities about California's eugenics laws. These elements will help people understand the far-reaching impact the laws had on state residents and, in particular, people classified as having disabilities and members of historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. This law disproportionately affected women and Latina/os.

With SB 1190, California will become the third state in the nation to compensate survivors of coerced sterilizations under state eugenics laws, following North Carolina (2013) and Virginia (2015). Given California's history as the state that sterilized the largest number of people under such laws (20,000 of 60,000 people nationally), enacting this bill is a vital acknowledgement of the harm inflicted on a large population.

We believe this bill plays an important role in advancing disability justice and reproductive justice. It recognizes the human right of each individual to control their reproductive capacity without state or other interference. It affirms that all people should be treated with respect and dignity regarding their lives and reproduction, including those who have historically been disenfranchised: people with disabilities, women, people of color, LGBTQ people, and poor people.

For many years, DRC has supported the need to recognize individuals who have lived and died while they were in state institutions. In the past years, we have sponsored legislation and resolutions creating the California Memorial Project to recognize those who lived, died and whose remains were interned at state hospitals and developmental centers. The California Memorial Project continues to be intended to restore dignity to persons whose remains are buried in gravesites on state hospital and developmental center lands. Like the California Memorial Project, SB 1190 recognizes people in these same facilities who were involuntarily sterilized under state eugenics laws. As with other wrongs done to our residents in the past for which compensation was paid, these residents deserve the same financial and historical recognition.

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.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis Child". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" and last name "Child" clearly distinguishable.

Curtis Child
Legislative Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Priscilla Quiroz, Legislative Aide, Office of Senator Skinner
Honorable Members, Senate Public Safety Committee
Stella Choe, Counsel, Senate Public Safety Committee
Myra Duran, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
Carly Myers, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Prof. Alexandra Stern, University of Michigan
Emily Galpern