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July 19, 2018

Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Appropriations Committee
California State Assembly
Capitol Building, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1396 (GALGIANI) as amended June 26, 2018– SPONSOR AND
SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez Fletcher:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, is pleased to **sponsor and support SB 1396**. This bill will soon come before you for hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

This bill establishes a central point of authority within state government to ensure that every state agency and entity complies with state and federal law by providing accessible technology for persons with disabilities to access information, services and benefits that they are entitled to receive.

Access to governmental services and information has significantly expanded through the availability of technology, including government websites. This technology has the potential to significantly increase the availability of persons with disabilities in accessing information and services. Unfortunately, the growing use of governmental services and information, state and state-entity online websites and technology are still not compliant with long-standing state and federal disability accessibility law. The problem is not with the law, but rather the leadership for ensuring compliance with the law.

Recently, the California State Auditor has released two reports investigating the accessibility of state agency and entity technology accessibility. In her 2015 report, the Auditor concluded that state departments must improve website accessibility so that persons with disabilities have comparable access to state services online. Additionally, the Auditor recommended that the California Department of Technology be designated as the lead agency responsible for monitoring changes to accessibility standards; provide training to state entities on web accessibility issues; and report on state agencies' web accessibility testing and results: <https://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2014-131.pdf>.

In her 2017 report, California Community Colleges: The Colleges Reviewed Are Not Adequately Monitoring Services for Technology Accessibility, and Districts and Colleges Should Formalize Procedures for Upgrading Technology: <https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2017-102/index.html>, the Auditor made several findings about the failure to monitor technology accessibility.

SB 1396 will require that leadership. It requires the creation of the Office of Accessible Technology within the Department of Technology under the Director of Technology; statewide compliance of accessibility requirements of every state agency and entity by December 31, 2020; and a complaint process for users with disabilities.

State and federal law is clear that state agencies and entities must ensure their technology is accessible to persons with disabilities. Despite the existing law, compliance is uneven or non-existent. Dedicated, responsible leadership is essential to ensure that persons with disabilities have the same access to information and services as persons without disabilities. This proposal would establish that leadership and accountability.

For these reasons, DRC sponsors and 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: Honorable Cathleen Galgiani, California State Senate
Mike Sharif, Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Galgiani
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jessica Peters, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations
Committee
Debra Cooper, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Jared Yoshiki, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus Committee