



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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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 142 (BEALL) as amended June 21, 2018 – 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, **supports SB 142**, which reinvests state savings from reduced prison admissions of people with mental illness into community-based treatment. This bill will soon come before you for hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Since 2011, California's prison system has undergone significant reforms and changes largely in response to federal lawsuits revealing inadequate medical and mental health care in the prison system.

Ironically, people with mental health disabilities have been the least likely to benefit from the reforms—even though the lawsuits were instigated on their behalf and the Supreme Court affirmed their complaints in 2011. The number of people in California state prisons with a mental health disability has increased in the last five years, both in number and proportion, and is expected to continue to increase in coming years.

SB 142 helps to address this issue while also increasing capacity for community-based mental health treatment. The bill incentivizes the

placement of defendants with mental health disabilities in community-based treatment, rather than state prison, by sharing the savings from reduced prison admissions with counties to reinvest in community-based treatment. Incarcerating people costs more than twice as much as providing community-based residential treatment, yet community treatment yields better results with reductions in arrests and length of incarceration. This reinvestment will create a positive cycle of increased treatment, reduced crime and more savings for even more services.

For these reasons, we support this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide you with 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 Jim Beall, California State Senate
Tania Dikho, Legislative Aide, Office of Senator Beall
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee.
Jessica Peters, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations
Committee
Shaun Naidu, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Gary Olson, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus Committee