



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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March 17, 2017

Honorable Janet Nguyen
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 3048
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 177 (NGUYEN) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Nguyen:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports SB 177. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Health Committee on March 29, 2017.

Existing law requires the Director of Health Care Services to maintain or enter into contracts with nonprofit caregiver resource centers (CRCs) to provide direct services to caregivers of cognitively disabled adults. These services include specialized information, family consultation, respite care, short term counseling, and support groups.

This bill would, each fiscal year, commencing with the 2017-18 fiscal year, appropriate \$3,300,000 from the General Fund to the State Department of Health Care Services for allocation to CRCs for providing respite care services.

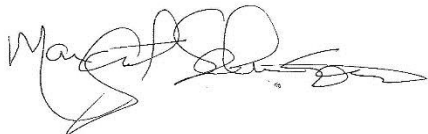
According to data from AARP, approximately 4.5 million unpaid family caregivers in California provide care to a family member with a cognitive disability. The economic value of the 3.85 million hours of unpaid labor provided by these caregivers is approximately \$47 billion. One-third of all California households contain at least one caregiver who provides 20 hours

or more per week. Respite care gives caregivers a temporary rest from caregiving, while the person cared for continues to receive assistance in a safe environment. Respite supports and strengthens a caregiver's ability to stay healthy to help care for their loved one at home. With a respite break, caregivers will be able to take mental and physical care of themselves. Not providing respite services will force people into more expensive services, such as emergency room visits and hospitalization.

CRCs are the lead agencies that exclusively serve and support unpaid family caregivers through respite and counseling services. SB 177 will allow the CRCs the opportunity to provide needed respite statewide.

For these reasons, we support this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position on this bill.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret Johnson, Esq.
Advocacy Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Elizabeth Watson, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Nguyen
Honorable Chair and Members, Senate Health Committee
Scott Bain, Consultant, Senate Health Committee