



**LEGISLATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

1831 K Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811-4114  
Tel: (916) 504-5800  
TTY: (800) 719-5798  
Intake Line: (800) 776-5746  
Fax: (916) 504-5807  
[www.disabilityrightsca.org](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org)

August 28, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
Capitol Building, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 419 (SKINNER) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 419 and requests your signature.**

SB 419 would prohibit the suspension of a pupil enrolled in a school district or charter school in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive, for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of those school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties. Additionally, the bill, until January 1, 2025, would prohibit the suspension of a pupil enrolled in a school district or charter school in any of grades 9 to 12, inclusive, for those same acts.

SB 419 would build on California's leadership in school discipline reform by extending limitations established in 2014 through AB 420, which eliminated defiance/disruption as grounds for K-3 suspensions. AB 420 resulted in a 60% drop in defiance/disruption suspensions in elementary schools during 2013-15. AB 420 incentivized school districts to adopt non-punitive alternatives to suspensions and expulsions. In contrast, students in grades 4-12 lost over 150,000 days of school due to defiance/disruption suspensions in 2016-17.

DRC strongly supports this bill. From our experience, students who have disabilities are often suspended or expelled as a disciplinary measure for behaviors that are really a manifestation of their disabilities. When behaviors are a manifestation of a student's disability, the behaviors should be addressed through the special education process where students can receive educational supports and services they need to receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

SB 419 is a positive step forward for all students, including students with disabilities. It prohibits suspensions and expulsions, and encourages alternatives using strategies that improve behavioral and academic outcomes that are age appropriate and designed to address and correct the pupil's specific misbehavior.

For these reasons, DRC supports this bill and requests your signature. 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 Nancy Skinner, California State Senate  
Fred Williams, Fellow, Office of Senator Skinner  
Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs  
Sam Miller, Assistant Legislative Deputy, Office of Legislative Affairs