



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
INFORMATION UNIT**

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September 11, 2018

Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 607 (SKINNER) as amended August 28, 2018 – REQUEST FOR
SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Brown:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 607 and requests your signature on this important legislation.**

Existing law prohibits a pupil from being suspended from school or recommended for expulsion, unless the superintendent of the school district or the principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has committed a specified act, including, among other acts, disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

Current law also prohibits the suspension of a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 3, inclusive, and recommending the expulsion of a pupil enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of those school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

Among other provisions, SB 607 (Skinner), commencing July 1, 2019, permanently prohibits the suspension of any pupil in kindergarten or grades

1 to 5, inclusive, and the expulsion of any pupil in kindergarten or in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, who disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties; prohibits, until July 1, 2023, the suspension of any pupil or grades 6 to 8, inclusive, for that same act; and makes these provisions applicable to charter schools

Disability Rights California strongly supports this measure. 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 divisibility, 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 607 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 on this critical bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Evelyn M. Abouhassan".

Evelyn Abouhassan
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Nancy Skinner, California State Senate
Melanie Morelos, Office of Senator Nancy Skinner
Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Legislative Secretary
Samuel Miller, Legislative Assistant