September 17, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 622 (DURAZO) – 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 622 and requests your signature.

SB 622 creates a protocol that a detention facility must follow when a death of an individual, who is in civil detention, occurs in the facility. This bill requires the state Department of Justice be notified of the death, be allowed access into the facility to open an investigation into the cause and circumstances of the death, and make a public report of the investigation.

Pursuant to state and federal laws DRC has broad authority to protect and advocate for the rights and interests of people with disabilities, including authority to investigate incidents of abuse or neglect and monitor facilities and programs serving individuals with disabilities. That authority includes access to public and private entities providing services and supports to individuals with disabilities, and to information and records prepared or maintained by these entities pertaining to such individuals in carrying out their responsibilities. The authority also extends to facilities used to house or detain noncitizens for the purpose of civil immigration custody.
We have used our authority to investigate the conditions within the Adelanto Detention Center, one of the largest privately operated immigration detention facilities in the United States. DRC released a report in March 2019: “There is no Safety Here: the Dangers for People with Mental Illness and other Disabilities in Immigration Detention at GEO Group’s Adelanto ICE Processing Center.” ([https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/reports/adelanto](https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/reports/adelanto)) That report detailed key findings within the facility including inadequate health and mental health care; underreported data on suicide attempts; and, failure to comply with disability antidiscrimination laws.

SB 622 would provide additional transparency of civil detention facilities operating in California when the tragic event of a death occurs within a facility. This bill furthers the protection of persons with disabilities, among the others, housed in these facilities.

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,

[Signature]

Curtis Child  
Legislative Director  
Disability Rights California

cc:  Honorable Maria Durazo, California State Senate  
Daisy Luna, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Durazo  
Melissa Immel, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs  
Tammy Trinh, Legislative Research Assistant, Office of Legislative Affairs