



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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June 8, 2017

Honorable Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr.
Chair, Public Safety Committee
California State Assembly
Capitol Building, Room 2117
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 725 (JACKSON) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer, Sr.:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports SB 725. This bill is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Public Safety Committee on June 13, 2017.

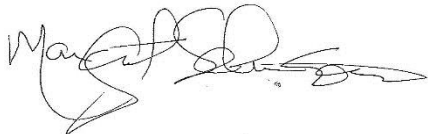
Existing law authorizes a court, with the consent of the defendant and a waiver of the defendant's speedy trial right, to postpone prosecution, either temporarily or permanently, of a misdemeanor. The defendant is placed in a pretrial diversion program, if the defendant was, or currently is, a member of the United States military and may have sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or mental health disabilities as a result of military service. Existing law authorizes the defendant to be referred to services for treatment.

This bill would specify that a misdemeanor offense for which a defendant may be placed in a pretrial diversion program includes a misdemeanor violation of driving under the influence or driving under the influence and causing bodily injury. The bill would not limit the authority of the Department of Motor Vehicles to take administrative action concerning the driving privileges of a person arrested.

Providing diversion programs for people with disabilities who are or were in the military with misdemeanor driving under the influence violations will ensure people receive necessary treatment and services. Often, people who have experienced trauma need diversion services rather than punishment so they find other ways to address their trauma. Addressing the underlying issues will make it more likely they will not drive under the influence in the future.

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: Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson, California State Senate
Bethany Renfree, Consultant, Office of Senator Jackson
Honorable Members, Assembly Public Safety Committee
Cheryl Anderson, Counsel, Assembly Public Safety Committee