



**LEGISLATION & PUBLIC
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May 30, 2017

Honorable Jim Beall
California State Senate
Capitol Building, Room 2082
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 755 (BEALL) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Beall:

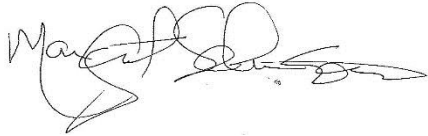
Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, supports SB 755, which will, in any action where there is credible evidence that a child is less than 15 years old and has been sexually abused, implement sensible parameters as to how long a child can be interviewed.

Attorneys that represent sexually abused children in civil suits have reported a disturbing practice: unnecessarily long and abusive psychological exams of the children by the defendant's paid mental health examiners. These defense interviews can turn traumatic because these young children are already emotionally fragile. An example of this is highlighted by a case where three girls between the ages of 5 and 7 were sexually molested at a daycare center. After the girls related the details of their case to investigating police officers, the District Attorney, and the court, the defendants moved to compel an examination of each girl by both a psychologist and psychiatrist. This detailed examination, which lasted for more than four hours, caused each girl severe emotional distress. Further many children may have disabilities that contribute to their distress. Limiting examinations will ensure all children are protected from unnecessary distress as a result of such examinations.

SB 755 will limit these types of traumatizing examinations by restricting the defense exams to no more than three hours, inclusive of breaks.

For these reasons, we support SB 755. 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 extending to the right.

Margaret Johnson, Esq.
Advocacy Director
Disability Rights California

cc: Tania Dikho, Fellow, Office of Senator Beall