

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

California bill would reform ‘failing’ system serving adults and kids with disabilities

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

A state lawmaker has joined with parents and advocates in an ambitious effort to reform the system that serves adults and children with disabilities, a vast network of nonprofits that is “failing in significant ways,” according to a new bill.

Assemblywoman Dawn Addis, D-Morro Bay, last week introduced a bill designed to provide greater transparency, accountability and increased confidence in California’s \$13 billion developmental disability service system.

Los Angeles Times

In California, spending on adults with disabilities differs by ‘race and place’

OCTOBER 27, 2022

The system charged with ensuring that California adults with developmental disabilities get crucial services is plagued with stark differences in spending by race, ethnicity and where people live, according to a report released Wednesday by a disability advocacy group.

The report from Disability Voices United, titled “A Matter of Race and Place,” builds on long-standing concerns about racial disparities at regional centers — a system of nonprofits that are responsible for coordinating services for developmentally disabled children and adults. It also underscores dramatic differences in spending between centers serving different parts of California.

Katrina

New bill seeks to address problems in California’s developmental disability system

AUGUST 30, 2023

AB 1147 tries to make regional centers themselves more accountable. Because regional centers are technically nonprofits, not government agencies, they are not subject to the public records act. Like, for instance, on this story I just reported on about Katrina, I was able to request reports and documents from DDS, but not the regional center. Even though a ton of information lives at the regional center level, they’re shielded from that public scrutiny. This bill would change that, and make those public information laws apply to regional centers as well.

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

It helps to be White if you’re disabled in California, study finds

OCTOBER 27, 2022

If you’re disabled and White, much more public money is often spent providing you services than if you’re disabled and Latino — and precisely where you live can make that gap yawn ever wider, a new study found.

“California’s developmental disability service system is plagued with racial, ethnic and geographic disparities that can dramatically and dangerously impact the essential services received by adults with developmental disabilities,” concludes Disability Voices United, a statewide organization that advocates for people with disabilities and their families, in a report released Wednesday, Oct. 26.

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

California spends \$14 billion on people with disabilities. Why do some go without help?

SEPTEMBER 07, 2023

Ana Soto, Latino mother of 14-year-old Max, shares her story Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023, about the struggles she’s faced getting the special education services for her son who at age 3 was diagnosed with autism and attention deficit hyper activity disorder. She feels he would have learned more life skills if he had received services at a younger age.....

In California, responsibility for finding services for people like Max sits with the state’s 21 regional centers — a \$14 billion network of publicly-funded, privately-operated nonprofits that coordinate support for about 400,000 children and adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

Assembly Bill 1147

The Disability Equity and Accountability Act

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(San Luis Obispo/Monterey)

Co-Sponsors:
Disability Voices United and the
Integrated Community Collaborative

The Need for this Bill: California's Regional Center System Has Big Problems

California is failing people with developmental disabilities. They face disturbing and potentially dangerous discrimination resulting in profound service disparities among race, ethnicity and geography. Many have lost trust in regional centers and the system. These problems have been known for years.

The California State Auditor conducted two audits of the system and found a number of issues that negatively impact services, especially for people of color. The Little Hoover Commission held four public hearings on the regional center system and issued a report last year with recommendations that align with AB 1147.

A More Accountable and Transparent System

AB 1147 will subject regional centers to the California Public Records Act. Why is this important?

The Public Records Act (PRA) ensures that Californians have a right to know how the state's business is being conducted and gives us the right to access non-private information for the public good.

Even though regional centers are not officially "government agencies," they are exclusively doing the government's job.

Other non-governmental groups are subject to the PRA, including charter schools.

In fact, regional centers land even more squarely in the public domain. While charter schools are an alternative to public schools, the regional centers are the only public option.

Regional centers will spend close to \$15 billion of taxpayer money in the next year, yet much of how they operate is still not transparent.

Despite having requirements to share some information, there is still much we don't know about how regional centers create their policies that affect the people they are supposed to serve.



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WHO SUPPORTS AB 1147?

Unions

United Food and
Commercials
Workers Union

Government

Alameda County
Board of Supervisors

Little Hoover
Commission

Media

California News
Publishers Association

Los Angeles Times
Editorial Board

Ethnic and Community Organizations

Cultivar y Crecer

Boat People SOS
Center for
Community
Advancement

Jewish LA Special
Needs Trust and
Services

Korean SDP
Network

Padres Unidos
por el Autismo

Special Needs
Network

Yurok Tribe

Service Providers

DIR/Floortime
Coalition of California

Easter Seals of
Northern California

Ed Asner Family
Center

Husman Associates

Momentum Agencies

Paradigm Adult
Services

PRAGNYA

Project AIR

Propel I Forward
Alliance (PIFA)

Silicon Valley
Independent
Living Center

Disability Organizations

Advocates for Angels

Autism Society of Los
Angeles

Autism Support
Community

California Down
Syndrome Advocacy
Coalition

Club 21 Learning and
Resource Center

Down Syndrome
Association of Santa
Barbara

Hope for Special
Education

Kern Down Syndrome
Network

The Natalie Project

Parents Helping
Parents

Spectrum of Hope
Foundation



Integrated Community
Collaborative

Advocacy Groups

Disability Rights
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Public Counsel