



DISABILITY
COMMUNITY
RESOURCE
CENTER

DCRC

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May 28, 2020

California Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Proposed State Budget Revision of Department of Rehabilitation Grant to Statewide Independent Living Centers

Dear Governor Newsom:

Since COVID-19 coronavirus was declared a pandemic in the U.S. on Friday the 13th of March, people with disabilities, seniors and those with certain underlying health conditions have navigated an unrelenting nightmare of a life threatening public health and economic crisis that has seemed laser focused on them.

The Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC) is an Independent Living Center (ILC) included in the network of 28 centers throughout California. The DCRC is a nonprofit source of local and state advocacy serving people with disabilities and seniors in western Los Angeles County since 1976. The DCRC provides essential resources to people with disabilities and seniors in our catchment area including, advocacy,

The California State Legislature is currently considering a proposal in response to your May State Budget Revision to cut funding through the Department of Rehabilitation to the network of Independent Living Centers by \$2.1 million to help cover a \$54.3 billion State budget deficit. The DOR grant is only a small fraction of the State budget shortfall, but it would present DCRC and other Independent Living Centers with a significant funding deficit and hinder their ability to continue to provide sustaining essential resources to people with disabilities and seniors, putting their lives at greater risk and frustrating their potential for recovery from this crisis.

The proposed budget would eliminate senior and adult services when more than a third of all coronavirus deaths in the U.S. are reported to be at nursing homes and long-term care facilities and when over half of all deaths are for people over the age of 65 according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). If implemented, the proposal would seriously undermine the Olmstead Decision – case law supporting the right of people with disabilities to live in the community of their choice – by putting people with disabilities and seniors at even more risk of institutionalization and death should those community based supports be cut back or eliminated.

To make matters worse, the proposed cuts to individual ILCs are being calculated based on a population formulary – the larger the population served, the larger the cut. This further hampers the response Independent Living Centers like the DCRC in population dense urban areas with greater racial diversity – where African Americans and Latinos have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 – can respond to the greater needs in our communities. Simply put, these proposed cuts do not make sense and will only serve to hurt communities most impacted by this crisis.

That is why, to save and preserve lives, the California Legislature should not implement the proposed harmful reductions and consider other alternatives to net what would be only modest savings to the State. Indeed, if “we are in this together,” the State should not amplify the already tremendous cost of this pandemic on the Californians who are most impacted.

We believe that all people living and working in the State of California should have full and equal access to health, safety and resiliency, which promotes belonging and equity in our communities. This is the time to prove that we don’t abandon that commitment by sacrificing our most vulnerable residents when they need us most.

Sincerely,



TJ Hill, Executive Director

Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC)

/s/ Marielle Kriesel

Marielle Kriesel, Systems Change Advocate

Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC)