



Oct. 7, 2014

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MEDIA ADVISORY

FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE OF CALIFORNIANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Senate Committee Meets in Los Angeles to Assess Impact of Underfunding for Support and Services

SACRAMENTO – The independence of thousands of Californians with developmental disabilities who work, attend schools and colleges, or maintain a household, is under direct threat caused by years of severe cuts to the state Department of Developmental Services.

Today, the state’s promise to the developmentally disabled made through the Lanterman Act is in jeopardy and the subject of state Senate Human Services Committee hearing scheduled Thursday in downtown Los Angeles that will be convened by **Senator Jim Beall**, D-San Jose, who oversees the committee. **Senator Carol Liu**, D-La Cañada Flintridge, who serves on the committee, will also attend the hearing.

The Lanterman Act: Promises and Challenges

Thursday, Oct. 9

1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Los Angeles City Hall, Room 350

200 N. Spring St., Los Angeles

Scheduled to testify are:

Santi Rogers, Director, Department of Developmental Services

Rashi Kesarwani, Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

Nancy Bargmann, Deputy Director/Community Services Division, Department of Developmental Services

Catherine Blakemore, Executive Director, Disability Rights California

Eileen Richey, Director, Association of Regional Center Agencies

Carol J. Bluiett, Case Manager, North Los Angeles Regional Center

Steve Miller, Retired Executive Director, Tierra del Sol Foundation

Talleen Zohrabian, client of North Los Angeles Regional Center

Armineh Zohrabian, parent of Talleen Zhorabian

Sue North, Director, Government Affairs, California Disability Services Association

Olivia Raynor, Director, the Tarjan Center at UCLA

Larry Landauer, Executive Director, Regional Center of Orange County

Since 2009, the Department of Developmental Services budget has been slashed by more than \$1 billion. The cuts have translated into caps on costs or hours for services, across-the-board reductions, and restrictions on payments for specific programs.

These actions have seriously undercut the mandate of the Lanterman Act, a state law that promises services and supports – defined as a “right” by the act -- to people with developmental disabilities and their families. The goal of the Lanterman Act is to enable people with developmental disabilities to live independently with dignity.

Twenty-one regional centers throughout the state, established through the Lanterman Act, are dedicated to assist people with developmental disabilities obtain the services they require. The centers serve about 180,000 people, ranging from infants to adults.

The cuts in Lanterman Act funding have reduced the numbers of paid providers able to help clients, seriously hampering access to needed therapeutic and other services.

“The result,” Beall said, “has been a system that is in risk of collapse from any additional budget cuts and poorly poised to carry out federally required changes.”