

May 4, 2011

The Honorable Mariko Yamada
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5160
Sacramento, CA 94249

VIA FACSIMILE: 916-319-2108

RE: AB 804 - Paid Family Leave Legislation – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Yamada:

We are writing on behalf of the Disability Rights Legal Center to thank you for introducing AB 804, which would expand the current Paid Family Leave (PFL) program to allow workers to receive partial wage replacement when they must miss work to care for seriously ill siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and parents-in-law.

In California, there are approximately 4 million caregivers of family members who are seniors, have disabilities, or have chronic illnesses. One of the primary ways that workers manage their caregiving responsibilities is to take periods of leave from their jobs. By providing caregivers partial wage replacement for up to six weeks of leave, the PFL program helps California workers defray the significant costs of family caregiving. Nearly the entire private workforce in California contributes a portion of every paycheck to participate in the PFL program. Unfortunately, many workers caring for a seriously ill family member lack access to the program because of the overly narrow definition of family.

The Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) has worked to implement the civil rights of people with disabilities for over 30 years. We are the oldest cross-disability legal advocacy organization in the country. Our mission is to promote the rights of people with disabilities and the public interest in, and awareness of, those rights by providing legal and related services.

Through our Cancer Legal Resource Center (CLRC), we have unique knowledge and experience with laws and legislation that impact the rights of individuals diagnosed with cancer, cancer survivors and caregivers.

The CLRC, a national, joint program of the DLRC and Loyola Law School Los Angeles, has provided over 231,000 people with free and confidential information and resources on cancer-related legal issues since 1997, including access to care, insurance, government benefits, estate planning, and employment. Please visit www.CancerLegalResourceCenter.org for more information.

The DRLC strongly supports AB 804 and we thank you for your work in ameliorating the hardships faced by families caring for a seriously ill family member. We look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,



Paula D. Pearlman, Esq.
Executive Director,
Disability Rights Legal Center



Joanna L. Morales, Esq.
Director,
Cancer Legal Resource Center