

June 14th, 2017

Assemblymember Chris Holden
State Capitol, Room 5136
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 279 (as amended March 1, 2017) - SUPPORT

Honorable Assemblymember Holden:

The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) represents the network of 21 non-profit regional centers that coordinate services for, and advocate on behalf of, California's over 300,000 people with developmental disabilities.

On behalf of ARCA, I wish to express our ongoing support for AB 279, your bill allowing increases to service provider rates to meet local minimum wages. Unfunded mandates stemming from changes to local, state, and federal laws and regulations continue to impact the entire developmental disabilities services system. The most significant local and state laws affecting the services system today are related to minimum wage.

ARCA supports better pay for service providers, particularly direct support professionals. Their work with and for people with developmental disabilities allows our service system to exist. However, we also recognize the harm unfunded mandates (unintentionally) cause providers.

For instance, the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County will see an increase from \$10.50 per hour to \$12.00 per hour effective July 1, 2017. In July, the minimum wage in San Francisco will rise to \$14.00 per hour. But only when the statewide minimum wage is increased are funds provided to enable service providers to pay their staff members the new minimum wage.

Local minimum wages and other unfunded mandates reduce the ability of the developmental services system to meet the core mission – supporting people with developmental disabilities to live full, integrated lives in communities of their choosing. Hourly wages must be paid in accordance with the law; it is only reasonable that the state increase funds to meet those costs as AB 279 proposes. We strongly support it, and all such efforts to efficiently address unfunded mandates, and are deeply appreciative of your leadership on this.

If you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact Daniel Savino in our office at dsavino@arcanet.org or (916) 446-7961.

Sincerely,

/s/Amy Westling
Interim Executive Director

Cc: Keith Penman, Executive Director, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center
Gloria Wong, Executive Director, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center
Lavinia Johnson, Executive Director, Inland Regional Center
Melinda Sullivan, Executive Director, Lanterman Regional Center
Elle Hoxworth, Legislative Aide, Office of Assemblymember Holden