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January 30, 2026

Senator Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services

Assemblymember Dr. Corey A. Jackson
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget, Subcommittee #2 on Human Services

RE: Department of Developmental Services (4300) – Governor’s 2026-27 Proposed Budget

Honorable Senator Menjivar and Assemblymember Dr. Jackson:

California’s regional centers are a network of 21 community-based non-profits, represented by the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). The regional centers coordinate services for, and advocate on behalf of, nearly 500,000 Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Governor’s proposed Budget for FY 2026-27 for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Given anticipated federal funding reductions in combination with questions about the future of the stock market, the state is facing considerable fiscal uncertainty both in the coming fiscal year and beyond. The Legislature and Administration have challenging decisions ahead of them in the coming months. Against this backdrop, ARCA appreciates that the Governor’s Proposed Budget includes continued recognition of anticipated growth of the population supported by regional centers and the developmental services community system. The proposed funding to support the IDD community demonstrates a commitment to building a strong foundation for its future.

ARCA appreciates and supports the focus on securing as much federal funding as possible to support the regional center system and those it serves. The state budgets in General Fund dollars, but overall Total Fund dollars are ultimately invested in communities and individual services. Maximizing the impact of each state dollar is essential. Regional centers are committed to working alongside DDS to increase federal funding levels to support the developmental service system’s continued growth and ongoing needs.

Wise investments in long-term solutions are essential as they allow the service system to continue to progress, even during uncertain economic times. ARCA supports the inclusion in the Governor’s proposed Budget of funding for ongoing work to replace the regional center information technology systems, as strong, reliable data is needed to track progress, guard against administrative inefficiencies, and enhance overall outcomes. ARCA also supports the proposals to strengthen DDS Headquarters in the areas of autism services and employment as well as its responsibilities under the federal Access Rule. Investment in DDS staffing in these areas supports policy development and monitoring functions. Parallel funding for regional center staffing is also necessary to implement these initiatives at the local and individual level.

ARCA will continue to build on our long-standing collaborative relationships to partner with those served, their family members, the Legislature, the Administration, and community organizations. Regional centers are deeply committed to meeting the individualized needs of Californians with IDD and look forward to conversations during the Budget development process about how we can all best do that together.

Sincerely,
/s/
Amy Westling
Executive Director

CC: Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Kim Johnson, Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency
Pete Cervinka, Director, Department of Developmental Services
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