

ARCA Standard – Legislative Activity

Focus Area and Scope of this Standard

- This standard applies only to activity undertaken by one or several regional centers organizationally or through their respective Executive Director or board members, on proposed statewide legislation, including Budget proposals to which ARCA has established a formal position.
- This standard does not apply to legislative or other activity a regional center undertakes on local political matters (*e.g.*, matters pending before local government entities).

Definitions of Words Used in this Standard

1. **Sponsored:** A bill developed by ARCA, or for which the Association is a lead advocate. A sponsored bill is usually ARCA's highest legislative priority.
2. **Support:** This position reflects ARCA's commitment to the legislation becoming law.
3. **Support if Amended:** This position signifies that the legislation needs changes to be beneficial. If the requested changes are made, ARCA is automatically in support of the bill.
4. **Neutral:** This reflects a change away from a position of active advocacy. It is primarily taken on bills that ARCA previously opposed unless amended, which have been amended sufficiently to address identified issues. Then, a "neutral" position automatically occurs.
5. **Oppose Unless Amended:** This position reflects that the legislation needs changes to render it not detrimental. ARCA is opposed to the bill, but if the requested changes are made, ARCA will move to Neutral.
6. **Oppose:** This position reflects that the bill is unacceptable to ARCA and its members as it would conflict with principles, policies, and the philosophy of the organization. The bill likely could not be amended sufficiently for ARCA to take a neutral position; ARCA has an interest in defeating the bill. If the bill is amended sufficiently to remove the reasons for opposition, a Neutral position is taken.
7. **Watch (+/+/+++):** These notations indicate a bill ARCA is publicly tracking but is not formally engaged with and its Board of Directors has not taken a position on. No advocacy to support, oppose, or change the bill is pursued. All such bills are reviewed by the Legislative Committee.
8. **Position Pending:** This is a significant bill that ARCA is tracking but has not formally taken a position on but anticipates it may as the bill evolves.
9. **No Consensus:** This formal position refers to bills for which there is no consensus view among ARCA's members. The designation of this position is not public and is used for internal deliberation purposes only.

Background/Why this is Important

- One of the core functions of ARCA is to advocate through the state legislative and budgetary processes for the formal positions adopted by its Board of Directors, or, when necessary, its Executive Committee. Success in this area for the benefit of California's developmental services system requires regional centers present a unified position and speak with a single voice consistent with established positions.

Standard

- ARCA's Board of Directors has the authority to establish formal budgetary or legislative positions and publicly share these in formal position statements. When necessary due to legislative timelines, ARCA's Executive Committee may establish formal legislative positions on behalf of the Association between meetings of the full membership. Every effort will be made to ensure these positions are informed by the perspective of ARCA's Legislative Committee. Prior to the establishment of ARCA's formal positions on significant legislative or budgetary positions, board members will be given the opportunity to engage in debate and discussion that will inform the final formal position statement.
- If ARCA has adopted a formal legislative or budgetary position, regional centers will not take actions that undermine ARCA's position or establish their own formal positions that differ from or specifically oppose those of the Association. Formal legislative positions include: 1) Sponsored; 2) Support; 3) Support if Amended; 4) Oppose Unless Amended; and, 5) Oppose.
- If ARCA's formal position is Position Pending, regional centers will not engage in independent political activity on the legislation.
- If ARCA's formal position is No Consensus or it does not have a formal position, regional centers may engage with the legislation, including the adoption of formal local positions.

Related Legal Requirements

- Article IV, Section 6 of ARCA's bylaws notes a prohibition of regional centers "engag[ing] in conduct materially and seriously prejudicial to the purposes and interests of ARCA."

Indicators of Performance

- Implementation of the basic requirements of this standard is evidenced by the absence of regional center organizational, Executive Director, or board member political messaging, either private or public, that conflicts with the established formal positions of the Association.
- This standard does not lend itself to quantifiable metrics, but high performance in this area is evidenced by supportive engagement in local communities consistent with ARCA's established political priorities, including through various channels of legislative communication.

Range

- Regional center political action to advance ARCA's formal legislative and budgetary positions is voluntary. The degree of engagement in this area is decided by local leadership and decision-making.

- Given that formal action on legislation is taken in Sacramento but is oftentimes informed by the perspectives of local constituents, the average regional center engages in activities in support of ARCA's budgetary and priority legislative positions through its social media channels and in meetings with local legislators and/or their staff. This may be accomplished through participation in ARCA's annual Grassroots Day and use of ARCA-generated social media posts and action alerts.
- High performance in this area includes local activities in alignment with ARCA's formal positions under the direction of local leadership. This may include but is not limited to pursuit of media coverage, encouraging other organizations and/or community members to engage politically in support of ARCA's position, promoting ARCA's established positions through legislative testimony, and ongoing discussions with key legislative leaders.

Resources Available

- ARCA's bill file with a comprehensive listing of its established political positions as well as copies of many of its formal legislative letters can be found [here](#).
- ARCA's Legislative Committee provides recommendations to the Association on formal political positions. Any member of ARCA's Board of Directors is welcome to attend meetings of the Legislative Committee.
- ARCA employs registered lobbyists and has a contract with a Legislative Advisor, any of whom are available to consult with individual regional centers to support their legislative activity, including bill tracking and engagement.
- ARCA staff consult with a communications firm to assist with traditional and social media messaging on key legislative and budgetary positions that can be leveraged for political activity at the local level.
- ARCA staff are available to conduct local training sessions on legislative advocacy upon request.
- ARCA staff coordinate an annual Grassroots Day to provide regional center members with an opportunity to advocate for key legislative and budgetary processes with legislative members and their staff.

Example

- A number of years ago, a regional center developed its own budgetary priority in collaboration with an advocacy organization that competed with ARCA's established budgetary priority for limited resources.
- In 2023, ARCA took an oppose unless amended position on a major piece of legislation. One regional center took a support position on that piece of legislation, which undermined ARCA's collective position on the bill.

Date Adopted by ARCA Board of Directors: January 17, 2025