



State Council on Developmental Disabilities



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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CONGRESS PASSES TAX BILL: WHAT'S NEXT?

SACRAMENTO – The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) is deeply concerned about the potential impact that passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have on persons with developmental disabilities.

“Our goal is for every Californian to have access to comprehensive, quality and affordable healthcare, be employed in competitive integrated employment, and live in their community with the necessary services and supports. Unfortunately, the actions of Members of Congress who voted for the bill, put those goals in jeopardy by repealing the individual mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and adding to the federal deficit,” stated Dr. April Lopez, Chair of the Council. The bill will now go to President Trump to sign. He is expected to sign by the end of the week. The Council calls on President Trump to consider the impact on persons with disabilities before signing the bill.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act adds to the federal deficit – close to \$1.5 trillion over 10 years – the same amount of money that the leadership of the Senate and House Budget Committees pledged to cut in Medicaid and Medicare spending in their fiscal year 2018 budget. While the final bill maintained some provisions that benefit select individuals, the overarching addition to the deficit in no way makes this bill a long-term win for people with disabilities. The final bill cuts taxes, but the tax cuts for individuals are only temporary, while corporations will continue to see permanent tax breaks.

“The Council stands ready to work with Governor Brown, the state legislature and state agencies to ensure that the Californians with disabilities are not further harmed by the unfortunate actions of Congress,” stated Lopez.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) reports have demonstrated that lower-income tax filers would receive minimal, if any, tax cuts over the long term. Having a disability or a family member with a disability is strongly associated with significant financial hardships and challenges to economic security. More specifically, people with disabilities are twice as likely to experience poverty,

and people with low incomes are more likely to have personal or family experience with disability.

In addition, the CBO and JCT analyses show that the bill will also result in less spending on lower-income groups, resulting in unequal and unfair contributions of lower-income individuals toward deficit reduction.¹

Close to 50 years ago, Congress established the State Councils in every state and territory. The Councils are authorized in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families design and can access services and supports that “promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion” in community life. The Lanterman Act establishes the SCDD in California to be comprised of 31 members appointed by the Governor, including individuals with disabilities, their families, other partners and state agencies. The SCDD develops a five-year state plan to implement the DD Act through the work of 12 regional offices in California. The plan is developed with stakeholder input and is focused on addressing systemic barriers to employment, housing, education, community supports, health and safety for persons with developmental disabilities.

¹ https://www.jct.gov/publications.html?func=download&id=5036&chk=5036&no_html=1 and <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/115th-congress-2017-2018/costestimate/reconciliationrecommendationssfc.pdf>