



Council Meeting Minutes November 28, 2023

Members Attending

Aubyn Stahmer (UCEDD)
Alex Reyes (S.A.)
Brian Winfield (DDS)
Cathay Liu (F.A.)
Debra Cooper (CHHS)
Eric Ybarra (S.A.)
Harold Ashe (F.A.)
Harold Fujita (F.A.)
Jessica Brown (F.A.)
Joseph Billingsley (DHCS)
Joyce McNair (F.A.)
Julie Gaona (S.A.)
Julie Neward (F.A.)
Julio Garnica (S.A.)
Kara Ponton (S.A.)
Kilolo Brodie-Crumsey (F.A.)
Larry Yin (UCEDD)
Lee Bycel (F.A.)
Mark Beckley (CDA)
Michael Ellis (F.A.)
Michael Thomas (DOR)
Nestor Nieves (S.A.)
Nick Wavrin (CDE)
Nicole Adler (S.A.)
Rosanna Ryan (S.A.)
Sandra Smith (DRC)
Sonia Jones (S.A.)
Viviana Barnwell (F.A.)
Wesley Witherspoon (S.A.)
Yasamin Bolourian (UCEDD)

Members Absent

N/A

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
ARCA
Brian Weisel
Bridget Kolakosky
Charles Nguyen
David Grady
Deepa Bajwa
Dena Hernandez
Doug Sale
Hannah Dunham
Holly Bins
Judi Muirhead
Julie Eby-McKenzie
Ken DaRosa
Kristy R
Lisa Hooks
Lisa Kain
Lynn
Maria Arredondo
Marisol
Matoya Terrell
Michelle Cave
Nicole For Love
Renee Bauer
Riana Hardin
Robbin Puccio
Scarlett VonThenen

Others Attending (cont.)

Sheraden Nicholau
Veronica Bravo
Walker Woodard
Yaritza Sanchez
Yolanda Cruz

Legend:

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wesley Witherspoon called the meeting to order at 10:31 A.M.

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

A quorum was established.

3. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

4. SWEARING IN OF NEW COUNCIL DELEGATE

Executive Director Carruthers swore in new Council Delegate Debra Cooper with the California Health and Human Services Agency.

5. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2023 MINUTES

Action 1

It was moved/seconded (Ybarra [S.A]/ Ryan [S.A.]) and carried to approve the September 2023 meeting minutes with the revision of excluding Councilmember Wavrin’s votes, who was absent from the meeting. (See last page for a voting record of members present)

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

7. CHAIR REPORT AND 2024 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Chair Witherspoon began his report by announcing committee assignments for 2024.

He then reported that he attended the November 5-8 AUCD 2023 Conference in Washington, DC where he participated in a panel entitled “People with Disabilities in Leadership Positions.” Lastly, he reported that he toured the White House.

SCDD committee reports were provided in the meeting packet. Chair Witherspoon asked that members read through these reports when they are able. The committee reports can be accessed online at <https://scdd.ca.gov/councilmeetings/>.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT AND STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Carruthers began his report with a quote from Dorothy Thompson, emphasizing that “Peace is not the absence of conflict but the

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presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict.” This quote is related to the State Council’s work, which involves finding innovative solutions to conflicts within various systems. The Council’s mission extends beyond any single system, operating in the spaces between multiple systems where individuals are impacted.

The Executive Director presented highlights of the 2023 Program Performance Review (PPR). He reminded members that the State Plan is a 5-year plan guiding the Council’s work and funded with approximately 8 million dollars from the Federal Administration on Community Living. It runs from 2022 to 2026 and includes three priorities and eleven objectives. The Executive Director reported significant progress, with the team meeting or exceeding expectations in all areas, surpassing five-year measures in four out of the eleven objectives within just two years. He also noted the significant increase in collaborative partners, rising from 500 during the pandemic to 850 in 2023, demonstrating the Council’s growing influence and trust. A detailed report will be completed and submitted by December 31st, with a presentation planned for the January Council meeting.

Additionally, the Executive Director highlighted the Council’s effective advocacy, leading to the signing of various bills into law. The bills can be grouped into three categories: civil rights, education, and safety. Within civil rights, AB 248 (Mathis) aimed to remove the R-word from California state law, while AB 545 (Pellerin) addressed access for voters with disabilities, including curbside voting. AB 544 (Laird) extended pandemic-era accessibility provisions for state public meetings into the future. Within education, AB 477 (Arambula) was related to the Inclusive Higher Education Act, and AB 87 (Quirk-Silva) allowed families to record 504 special education plan meetings. Lastly, in the area of safety, AB 946 (Nguyen) codified California Highway Patrol’s practices for endangered missing advisories for individuals with IDD. Collectively, these six bills positively impacted over 4 million Californians.

At the request of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director highlighted three major accomplishments for the year: employment, the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP), and outreach to underserved communities. Regarding employment, the Council initiated an implementation plan to phase out subminimum wage, secured a Statewide Employment First Office, brought national

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employment expertise to California through the NEON Grant, encouraged 100 employers in LA and SF to employ people with disabilities by issuing grants, and established a permanent internship program for people with IDD aspiring to be state employees. The second accomplishment was the creation of the Supported Decision-Making Technical Assistance Program (SDM-TAP) with a \$5 million state general fund allocation to SCDD, aimed at providing alternatives to conservatorship and supporting individuals in making decisions without impeding their self-determination. The third achievement was the Council's increased outreach to underserved communities, marked by a 20% increase in disparity activities compared to 2022 and a doubling of Spanish translations. SCDD's regional office structure played a crucial role in reducing racial, language, and geographic inequities in service delivery.

Lastly, the Executive Director shared photos with Councilmembers during his end-of-year visits.

9. CLOSED SESSION: PERSONNEL

The Council went into closed session.

10. RECONVENE OPEN SESSION

The Council reconvened from closed session with no actions to report.

11. 2024 POLICY PLANNING

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Bridget Kolakosky presented an overview of the legislative process, 2023 bill idea contest, and the proposed 2024-25 policy priorities for consideration.

She reminded members that California's legislature is divided into two separate houses, the Assembly, and the Senate. She went on to describe the four main steps to the legislative process: generating a bill idea and getting it introduced; amending the bill in policy committees; voting on the bill; and finally, the signing or vetoing of the bill.

The policy unit, led by Deputy Director Kolakosky, tracks legislation on behalf of the Council and reviews about 1,500 bills annually. Using the Council's developed legislative platform, they determine which bills are crucial to the I/DD population, which require recommendations for Council action, and which should be monitored.

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The third annual “There Should Be a Law Contest!” received a total of 52 bill ideas focused on improving services, civil rights, and housing. The contest is held every September and remains open throughout the month. Following the submission period, staff reviews all the bill ideas that were submitted, and selects a winner. All of the bill ideas are then compiled into an annual report, which is posted on the Council’s website and shared with Councilmembers and legislative offices.

This year’s contest winner, self-advocate Raquel Gibbons from Orange County, proposed a bill to address the lack of support for individuals with mental and behavioral health conditions, especially those showing symptoms like aggression. Ms. Gibbons’ bill advocates for the creation of specialized facilities equipped with well-trained professionals to treat such cases with compassion and empathy. It also urges for insurance companies to support these services, both inpatient and outpatient. She believes that children and youth should never be denied services, regardless of their behavioral conditions or required treatment. The Council will recommend Ms. Gibbons’ bill idea to legislators, include it in the annual report, and keep Councilmembers and the public informed on its status if it gets introduced.

The Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC) met on October 26th to consider policy priority recommendations for 2024. Following Committee discussion, the LPPC is recommending that the Council focus on the theme “Health, Home, Work” with a strong emphasis on housing, mental health, and employment issues. The ‘Health’ priority aligns with the Governor’s recent revision of the Mental Health Services Act and the upcoming Behavioral Health Services Act bond vote. The ‘Home’ priority focuses on housing stability, notably through support for SB 37, which provides rental assistance. The ‘Work’ component supports efforts in employment, including supporting the Health and Human Services Agency in establishing the Employment First Office and SCDD’s first annual SB 639 report on subminimum wage.

Action 2

It was moved/seconded (Ybarra [S.A]/ Ryan [S.A.]) and carried to adopt LPPC’s recommendation to focus on legislative priorities that fall under the theme of “Health, Home, Work” during 2024. (See last page for a voting recording of members present.)

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12. **NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next Council meeting will be held on January 23, 2024.

Chair Witherspoon adjourned the meeting at 2:39 P.M. in memory of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, a mental health and women's rights advocate.

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Name	Action 1	Action 2
Adler, Nicole	For	For
Ashe, Harold	For	For
Barnwell, Viviana	For	For
Beckley, Mark	For	For
Billingsley, Joseph	For	NP
Bolourian, Yasamin	For	For
Brodie-Crumsey, Kilolo	For	NP
Brown, Jessica	For	For
Bycel, Lee	For	For
Cooper, Debra	Abstain	NP
Ellis, Michael	For	For
Fujita, Harold	For	For
Gaona, Julie	For	For
Garnica, Julio	For	For
Jones, Sonia	For	For
Liu, Cathay	For	For
McNair, Joyce	For	For
Neward, Julie	For	For
Nieves, Nestor	For	For
Ponton, Kara	For	For
Reyes, Alex	For	For
Ryan, Rosanna	For	For
Smith, Sandra	For	For
Stahmer, Aubyn	For	For
Thomas, Michael	For	For
Wavrin, Nick	Abstain	For
Winfield, Brian	For	NP
Witherspoon, Wesley	For	For
Ybarra, Eric	For	For
Yin, Larry	For	For

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