

# State Council on Developmental Disabilities

## Executive Director Report

November 18, 2025

Aaron Carruthers



# Overview

- Tributes
- Policy Update
- Public Safety Power Shutoffs
- Town Halls
- Swearing In & Orientation
- SCDD Administration and Announcements



# Tribute: Alice Wong



“Disabled people know what it means to be vulnerable and interdependent. **We are modern-day oracles.** It's time people listened to us.”

Alice Wong

Founder Disability Visibility Founder; Author; Disability Rights Activist; MacArthur Fellow; Cat Mom

# Tribute: Alice Wong



Message from Alice she asked to be sent at the time of her passing:

- “Hi everyone, it looks like I ran out of time. I have so many dreams that I wanted to fulfill and plans to create new stories for you. There are a few in progress that might come to fruition in a few years if things work out. I did not ever imagine I would live to this age and end up a writer, editor, activist, and more. As a kid riddled with insecurity and internalized ableism, I could not see a path forward. It was thanks to friendships and some great teachers who believed in me that I was able to fight my way out of miserable situations into a place where I finally felt comfortable in my skin. We need more stories about us and our culture. You all, we all, deserve the everything and more in such a hostile, ableist environment. Our wisdom is incisive and unflinching. I’m honored to be your ancestor and believe disabled oracles like us will light the way to the future. Don’t let the bastards get you down. I love you all.”

# Tribute: Eric Ybarra



# Policy Update

## End of 2025 Legislative Session

- October 13, 2025 last day for Governor Newsom to sign or veto legislation
  - Bills cannot be enacted without a signature
- Legislature sent total of 917 bills to the Governor
  - Governor signed 794
  - Governor vetoed 123
- The Council took positions on 19 bills
  - Supported 18 bills, 7 signed into law
  - Opposed 1 bill, that bill died in committee

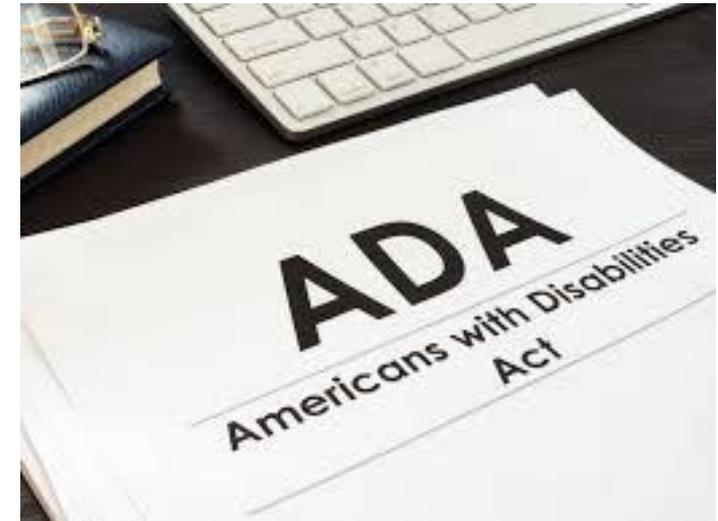


# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Civil Rights

- SB 84 (Niello) ADA Lawsuits
  - Would establish waiting periods and procedural barriers before a person with a disability who encounters an access barrier can enforce their civil rights in court or bring lawsuits.
  - Council opposed
  - Status: Failed to pass Legislature



**Impact: Keeps access for ADA lawsuits, 3,252 lawsuits in 2024**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Civil Rights

- SB 470 (Laird) Bagley Keene
  - Authorizes teleconferencing provisions to allow pandemic-era flexibility for meetings of state councils, boards and commissions
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



**Impact: Keeps flexibility and accessibility for over 400 state bodies**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Education

- AB 784 (Hoover) Special Education
  - Clarifies specialized Deaf/Hard of Hearing services be included in an IEP
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



**Impact: Ensures needs of 865,213 students in special education**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Education

- SB 373 (Grove) Nonpublic Schools
  - Requires more oversight of students with disabilities who attend certain private special education schools and ensure pupils are informed about their rights and are provided with a copy of their rights and procedural safeguards.
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



**Impact: Protects 16,230 students in nonpublic schools**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Education

- SB 389 (Ochoa Bogh) Licensed Vocational Nurses
  - Authorizes a licensed vocational nurse, under the supervision of a credentialed school nurse, to assist students with disabilities with basic respiratory services.
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



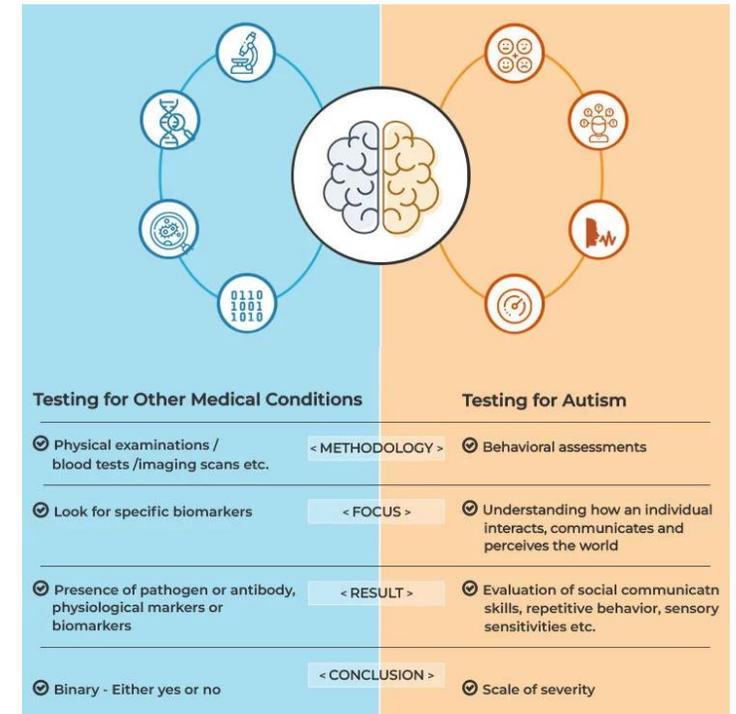
**Impact: Protects 179,939 students with respiratory needs**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Health

- AB 951 (Ta) Recertification
  - Starting January 1, 2026, health insurance plans cannot require people with a past diagnosis of autism or a related developmental disorder to get re-diagnosed to maintain health coverage.
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



**Impact: Protects 196,756 Autistic people served by regional centers**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Community Supports

- AB 1172 (Nguyen) Day Programs
  - Allow staff in adult day programs to administer emergency anti-seizure medication and to provide immediate medical intervention.
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



**Impact: Protects the health of people attending day programs**

# Policy Update

## Status of Legislation Council Supported or Opposed

### Safety

- SB 671 (Cervantes) Pedestrian Crossing Signals
  - Puts into law the CalTrans practice of installing Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)
  - Council supported
  - Status: Governor signed



**Impact: Protects 1,300,000 vision impaired pedestrians daily**

# Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)

## Background

- In 2018 Camp fire, PG&E hardware failed, 153,000 acres burned, 52,000 people evacuated, 85 fatalities, 18,800 structures destroyed
- To try to prevent future fires, utilities began PSPS: turn off the energy when there are high winds and dry air
- However, this shift the safety to people with access and functional needs (AFN)



# Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)

## Outcome

- In 2018, AFN leaders began meeting with the utilities to find ways for the utilities to mitigate the impact of PSPS on people with AFN who rely on electricity
- Disability Disaster Access Resource (DDAR) program created, funds CA Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC) to provide batteries, food vouchers, hotel vouchers, elevate more critical needs
- Contract: \$5 million for 3 years



# Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)

## Problem

- On Oct 16, SCE informed CFILC the DDAR contract would end in 2 weeks on October 31
- PSPS season active, SCE used DDAR up to Oct 30
- Leaves people in immediate peril

## Questions to Utilities cc CPUC

- How will you meet immediate needs?
- How will you comply with regulatory requirements?

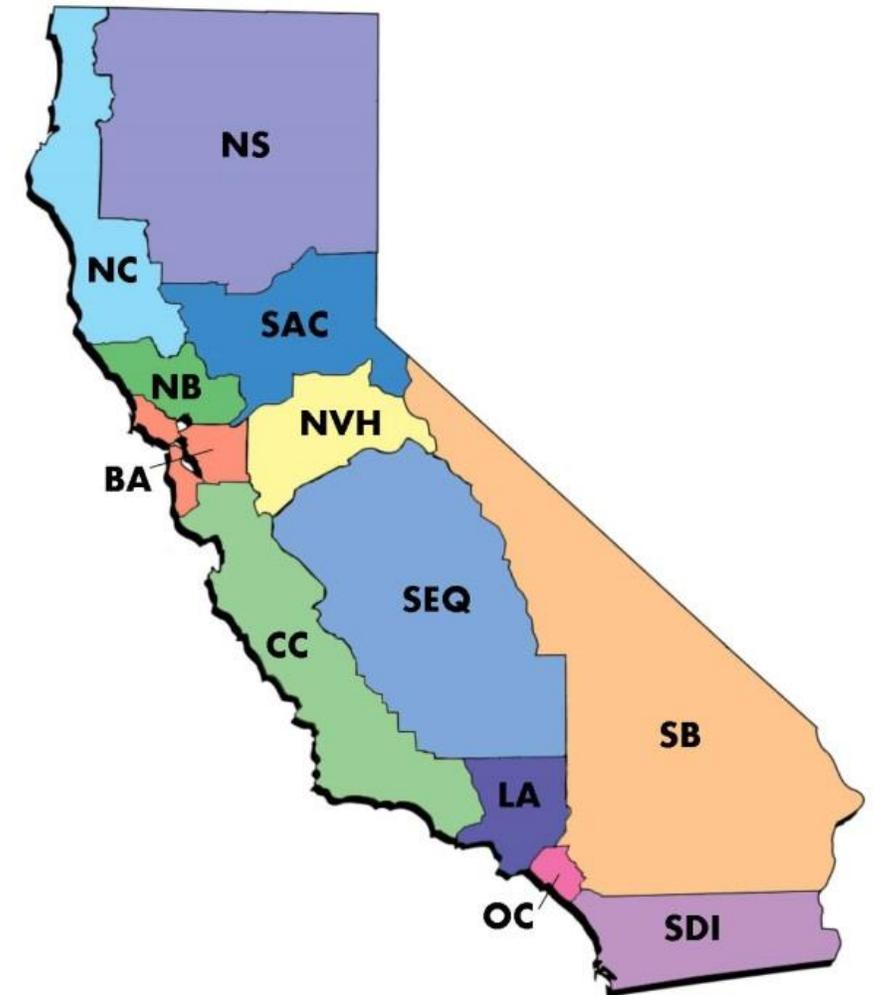


# State Plan Town Halls

## Held Town Halls in:

- Chico
- Manteca
- Palm Desert
- San Jose
- Eureka
- Napa
- Redding
- Santa Ana
- Fresno
- Oakland
- San Diego
- Vacaville

- Total State Plan Surveys: 4,197!!



# Swearing In & Orientation



Sascha Bittner, San Francisco



Michelle Padilla, Rocklin



Melissa Fitch, Santa Barbara



Kim Rothschild, Sacramento



Eric Aguilar, Fontana

# SCDD Administration and Announcements

- Council budget got through the shutdown because of prudent budgeting, spending, and reserves
- President Trump and Congress propose funding DD Councils nationally
  - Next step: Congress adopt 2026 budget
- Renewed contracts with DDS for:
  - Quality Assurance (satisfaction surveys for regional center consumers/families)
  - Self Determination Orientation Training
- Beginning All-Staff In-Person Training (approved by Council in August 2022)



THANK YOU

