

# Agenda Item #6

## 2025-2026 Connecting Policy and Advocacy to Communications: Better, Stronger, Together

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# Better, Stronger, Together

- How are policy and advocacy connected to communications?
  - Systemic advocacy requires lots of people
  - We need to recruit as many people as possible
  - People need to know about the issues – why is this issue important, why should action be taken, how will it impact their lives?
- Better, Stronger, Together – why was it chosen and how will it be used?

# Agenda Item #7

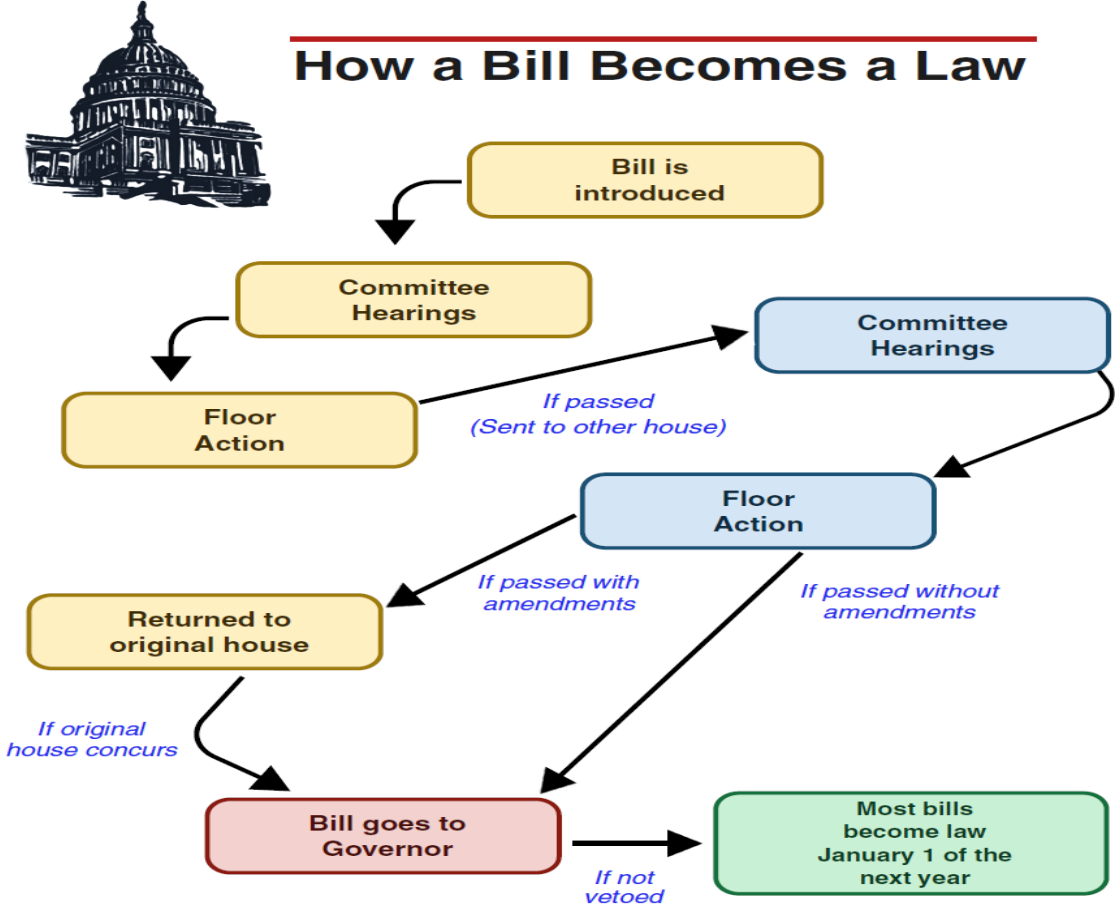
## *Legislative Overview*

*(Pages 15-26)*

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# Legislative Process Map

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# March, April, and May 2025 - Bill Hearings

- Bill introductions in January and February
- March and April are when the Senate and Assembly hold policy committee hearings for bills
- This is important because these hearings always give the public a chance to speak about why they like or dislike a bill.
  - This is called testifying and the legislators' vote will be influenced by what the public shares. There is an online portal where written comments can be submitted.
- Each bill will pass or fail.

# 2025-2026 SCDD Legislative Policy Priorities

- Protect and enhance civil rights
- Ensure federal policies and laws advance inclusion and self-determination
- Guarantee access to education and employment
- Identify and prioritize emerging issues in the IDD community
- Promote access to quality supports in the community
- Ensure safety in the community
- Improve housing and community living

[See pages 23 and 24 of your packet for more information.](#)

# 2025-2026 Targeted Priorities – Update

1. Authorized Representative: SB 1052 (Gonzalez)
2. Plain Language: AB 2360 (Arambula)
3. Chronic Absenteeism (Law Contest Winner)
4. Special Education Work Opportunities (Law Contest Winner)
5. Marriage Penalty SSI
6. Protective Paid Leave for Sibling Bonding

[See page 25 of your packet for more information.](#)

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# Great News!

Staff was able to secure authors for two of its targeted priorities.

- Authorized Representative
- Plain Language

More details to follow later in the meeting.

# Chronic Absenteeism – 2026 Priority

**Proposed Solution:** Make clear in law that efforts to improve school attendance should work together with special education supports for students with disabilities.

- When a student with a disability is chronically absent, schools should consider whether the student’s disability or related needs are contributing to the absences.
- Schools should determine whether the student needs additional IEP supports, services, or accommodations to help them attend school.



# Chronic Absenteeism – 2026 Priority

- Allow attendance staff and IEP teams to work together to identify solutions that improve attendance and access to education.
- Ensure state guidance and training for attendance staff includes information about special education rights and how IEP teams can help address attendance barriers.
- Emphasize supportive responses to attendance issues rather than punitive or exclusionary approaches.

# Special Education Work Opportunities – 2026 Priority

## Proposed Solution:

- Allow a parent, guardian, or student (if 18+) to sign a consent form acknowledging that the contractor's employee interacting with the student has not completed a criminal background check.



# Special Education Work Opportunities – 2026 Priority

- This consent would waive the background check requirement in certain work-based learning situations.
- Parents and guardians can already waive fingerprinting requirements for students in independent study.
- Expanding this option to work-based learning programs would help restore access to placements.

# Marriage Penalty SSI – 2026 Priority

- Long term priority
- For SSI, individuals have a limit of \$2000 in assets. If two people are married, they have a limit of only \$3000.
- Investigated history (such as the last time these limits were updated) and current legislators.
- Increase benefit amount to 100% of federal poverty level (presently ~75%), update asset limit to \$10/20k, earn up to \$512/mo without losing benefits, [and more!](#)

# Protective Paid Leave Sibling Bonding – 2026 Priority

- Investigated legislative options, feasibility, and HR-related issues

# Agenda Item #8

State Legislative and Budget Update.  
This will be a vote item.

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# 2026 Legislative Summary

- This year, there were 1,798 bills introduced
  - In 2025, 2,350 were introduced
- This is the lowest number of bills introduced in the past twenty years.
- This is because bill introduction limits were lowered from 40-50 to 35 bills per Member.

# 2026 Sponsored Legislation

# Authorized Representative – 2026 Priority

Introduced by Senator Gonzalez – [SB 1052](#)

## ■ **What will the bill do?**

- Creates contingent or backup appointments and defines them
- Creates a one-year limit and explicitly allows annual reappointments
- Defines “good cause”
- Explicitly permits SCDD to investigate when needed, with consent

# Plain Language - 2026 Priority

Introduced by Assembly Member Arambula – [AB 2360](#)

## ■ **What will the bill do?**

- Creates a definition for “plain language”
- Require each state agency, to create, follow, and post on its website a plain language policy that identifies how the state agency will incorporate or strengthen plain language writing and design principles and practices.
- Requires the head of each state agency to designate a senior official to oversee the implementation of plain language.

# 2025-26 Two-Year Bills Updates (1 of 2)

- **Civil Rights:** SB 84 (Niello) Disability access: construction-related accessibility claims: notice of violation and opportunity to correct
- **Education:** SB 244 (Grayson) Public postsecondary education: disabled student services: assessments
- **Health:**
  - AB 308 (Ramos) The Family Urgent Response System
  - AB 350 (Bonta) Health care coverage: fluoride treatments
  - SB 363 (Wiener) Health care coverage: independent medical review

# 2025-26 Two-Year Bills Updates (2 of 2)

- **Informal and Formal Supports:**

- AB 1220 (Arambula) Developmental services: denials of services and notices of actions
- AB 1099 (Bryan) Developmental services: initial intake: assessment

# 2026 New Legislation for LPPC Consideration

See 2026 Bill Chart Handout for detailed summaries.

# Discussion of Bills 2026

## During this next part of the meeting:

- We will discuss each bill
- We want to know what you think of each bill
- LPPC Members will vote to either support or not support each bill
- **Please Note:** The Policy Team identified other bills not included in this presentation. We will continue to track these bills and review others brought to our attention.

# 2026 New Bills

This year the Policy Team identified bills in the following policy categories:

- Education
- Health
- Informal/Formal Community Supports
- Safety

# Education #1

- **Bill:** [AB 1861 \(Lackey\)](#) Special education: complaint database
- **What will this bill do?** Requires the Department of Education, by January 2028, to create and maintain an online database of all state compliance complaints it receives beginning with an unspecified school year.
- **Position Recommended:** Support

# Education #2

- **Bill:** [AB 2189 \(Nguyen\)](#) State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- **What will this bill do?** Allows SCDD to give a grant to a statewide advocacy organization to do outreach and train students and families regarding special education advocacy and rights. This would depend on getting money from the Legislature.
- Sponsored by The Arc
- The Assembly Member's staff reached out seeking SCDD's support. Using the delegated authority provided to the Council and LPPC Chairs, the Council supports AB 2189.

# Education #3

- **Bill:** [SB 1222 \(Choi\)](#) Career Technical Education Technical Assistance and Equity Pilot Program Act
- **What will this bill do?** Creates a 3-year pilot program called the Career Technical Education (CTE) Technical Assistance and Equity Pilot Program, focused on fairness and inclusion. The CA Superintendent would choose a county office of education to run the program and pick 2 regions to get extra support.



# Education #3

- Among other things, the program would:
    1. Share best practices for inclusive CTE programs for students with disabilities and other underserved groups
    2. Make easy-to-use guides for school-industry partnerships
    3. Help county offices in the pilot regions with training and coordination.
  
  - **Position Recommended: Support**
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# Health #1

- **Bill:** [AB 1561 \(Krell\)](#) Medi-Cal: complex rehabilitation technology
- **What will this bill do?** It stops DHCS, who administers Medi-Cal, from requiring prior approval for repairing wheelchairs if the repair costs \$1,250 or less. Repairs or replacements wouldn't need a new doctor's prescription if the wheelchair was already approved, but the supplier must keep records of the repair work and reasons, which DHCS can check later.
- **Position Recommended:** Support

# Health #2

- **Bill:** [AB 1670 \(Arambula\)](#) Medi-Cal: excluded services
- **What will this bill do?** At the time of this writing, this is a spot bill.
- **Discussion:** If dentists cannot complete a dental procedure due to behavioral issues, they are not permitted to bill for the procedure. What is the Committee's thoughts if this bill were amended to permit dentists to attempt and bill for an unsuccessful procedure up to three times? What would be the anticipated impact on the number of dentists willing to serve individuals with IDD? What are other issues that may be of concern?
- **Position Recommended:** Dependent on discussion and bill amendments.

# Health #3

- **Bill:** [AB 2081 \(Stefani\)](#) Medi-Cal: Home and Community-Based Alternatives (HCBA) Waiver
- **What will this bill do?** Would among other things, expand the number of those served by the Medi-Cal HCBA Waiver by removing the current limit on how many people can join the program (capped at 5,000 extra slots). It would require, beginning in 2027, to ensure that the HCBA Waiver provides for an annual increase of at least 10,000 waiver slots for each waiver year.
- **Position Recommended:** Support
- **Note:** The Council supported a similar bill last year, AB 315 (Bonta) but the bill failed.

# Health #4 (Education)

- **Bill:** [SB 1226 \(Ochoa Bogh\)](#) Pupil health: individuals with exceptional needs: respiratory services
- **What will this bill do?** Remove the rule allowing LVNs (licensed vocational nurses), supervised by a school nurse, to help students with special needs with certain basic breathing care. Instead, qualified people could provide basic breathing services (such as suctioning) to those students, without supervision by school nurse.
- **Position Recommended:** Support

# Informal and Formal Supports #1

- **Bill:** [AB 2209 \(Bains\)](#) Developmental services: caregiver succession
- **What will bill do?** Requires a discussion at the IPP meeting regarding caregiver succession when the primary caregiver reaches 55 years of age, and at any time upon the request of the person served, primary caregiver, or authorized representative. The bill requires that any caregiver succession plan be documented in the person's IPP.

# Informal and Formal Supports #1

- The person served may choose **not** to develop a caregiver succession plan. If a discussion about a plan occurs, it must be person-centered, guided by the person's wishes and goals, support their independence, and follow supported decision-making principles.
  
- **Position Recommended: Support**

# Informal and Formal Supports #2

- **Bill:** [SB 969 \(Reyes\)](#) Developmental services: remote services and supports
- **What will bill do?** By July 2027, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) must identify services and supports eligible for remote delivery and develop the infrastructure to implement them, including posting guidance on its website. Regional centers would then be required to inform persons served and/or their families/representatives of the option to receive remote services if they wish.
- **Position Recommended:** Support

# Safety #1

- **Bill:** [SB 837 \(Reyes\)](#) Disaster and emergency preparedness
- **What will this bill do?** Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) programs presently must provide services to older adults and people with disabilities with technical assistance re: long term care services and supports (for example, waiver services, IHSS, and community based adult services).
- This bill would require ADRC programs to offer emergency preparedness training specifically tailored for older adults and people with disabilities so they can prepare for disasters and stay safe before, during, and after emergencies.
- **Position Recommended:** Support

Committee discussion  
and vote.

# Action Recommended

Review staff's recommendations on legislative positions and request that the Council take action to adopt the Committee's recommendations at the March 2026 Council meeting.

# 2026 Budget Calendar Review

## February - May

# February - April 2025 Budget Hearings

- The Senate and the Assembly each have their own Budget committee. Each Budget committee has five or six sub-committees.
  - Each subcommittee focuses on an area of policy, such as “health” or “human services”.
- The sub-committees began hearings in February to hear about what is happening in the state budget and the requests of individual departments. Hearings will continue through the end of March.
- The next step will be hearings with each of the full budget committees in April.
- Knowing about the Budget is important because they make decisions that affect the services our community receives.

# Budget Reminders

- The proposed budget highlights can be found on pages 29 – 31 of the packet.
- The Council's Budget Guiding Principles can be found on pages 33-34 of the packet.

# Questions?

