



ASSEMBLYMEMBER JOAQUIN ARAMBULA, M.D. 31ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 2360 Improving Plain Language Access

Summary

AB 2360 improves access and equity by ensuring state communications are clear, consistent, and written in plain language, so all Californians can better understand the laws that affect their lives and participate more fully in government.

Background

Accessibility of federal and state guidelines are a key part of ensuring a government by the people and for the people. Plain language ensures all Californians, including those with cognitive disabilities, limited literacy, or language barriers, can easily find, understand, and use information to meet their needs.

Complex language can harm Californians navigating state agencies. When people don't understand government documents, they are less likely to access the services meant to help them. There are currently almost 4 million Californians missing out on critical services, including:

- 1,540,000 uninsured Californians who are eligible for one of California's public medical insurance plans, including Covered CA or Medi-Cal
- 240,000 Californians for social services through CalWORKS
- 1,925,000 Californians for food assistance through CalFresh
- 168,000 Californians with severe disabilities not served by regional centers

Use of plain language in government has also been shown to reduce inquiries, increase compliance, and ultimately reduce costs. In Washington, plain language revisions to a Department of Revenue letter resulted in 95% fewer hotline calls and \$5 million in extra revenue. Similar revisions to a U.S. Veterans Benefits contact letter raised the response rate from 35% to 55%, resulting in \$8 million in cost savings per year. Ensuring the usefulness of state communications to the public is a necessary next step in creating a more efficient, accessible, and equitable system.

Related Legislation

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires that federal agencies use plain language when communicating with the public.

This Bill

- 1) Defines what is meant by "plain language" to mean an eighth grade reading level
- 2) Requires that state departments supply digital and print informational materials in plain language
- 3) Requires plain language contact in state departments/agencies
- 4) Conforms state law in accordance with federal plain language guidelines

Support

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Sponsor)

For More Information

Arali Seneviratne (she/her)
Office of Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Arali.Seneviratne@asm.ca.gov or (916) 319-2031



SB 1052 (Gonzalez) Authorized Representatives

SUMMARY

Senate Bill (SB) 1052 would allow the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to make “contingent” appointments of authorized representatives to help people with disabilities in accessing services if their family member or support system is suddenly unable to provide assistance.

The bill would also clarify the process for SCDD to determine when an authorized representative is necessary and provide clear limits on the duration of appointments.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law establishes SCDD as an independent authority charged with promoting self-determination, independence, and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities (WIC 4520).

Existing law authorizes SCDD to appoint authorized representatives for people with developmental disabilities to ensure the protection of their civil rights and access to services (WIC 4541).

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

Under current law, an Authorized Representative (AR) is tasked with assisting individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) to express their desires and in making decisions and advocating for their needs, preferences, and choices when the person with IDD has

no parent, guardian, or conservator legally authorized to represent them and the person has either requested the appointment of an authorized representative or if the person’s rights will not be protected or advocated for without a representative.¹

In practical terms, the AR can assist the person on all matters related to regional centers, developing individual program plans (IPPs), and regional center-provided services, including signing the IPP.²

As federal immigration enforcement activities have increased, the risk of a person with IDD losing access to their support system if their current AR, involved family member or friend, or other caregiver is detained or deported has risen. This situation would leave a person with IDD without official representation and decision-making support in their IPPs and navigation of regional center services, which could result in gaps in essential services or individuals ending up in conservatorships – which are more restrictive and remove many of a person’s legal rights.

Current law does not expressly provide for contingent appointments, define a standard for determining when a person’s rights or interests cannot be properly protected or advocated without a representative, or establish any time limit or renewal requirement for these appointments.

¹ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=4541&lawCode=WIC

² https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Guide_to_Californias_Regional_Center_Services_System.pdf

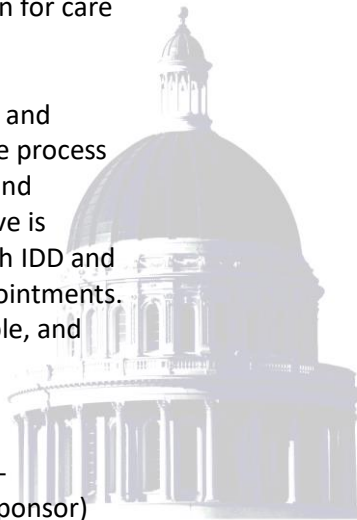
The absence of these important specifications in current law undermines consistency, transparency, and alignment with person-centered and rights-based practices. Clear legislative authority in these areas is necessary to support predictable, accountable, and legally grounded implementation.

SOLUTION

SB 1052 will allow SCDD to make “contingent” appointments of authorized representatives to assist people with disabilities in accessing services.

Contingent appointment of an AR identifies a person who would represent the individual served by the regional center in the family’s absence. Contingent appointments can help families facing sudden separation plan for care for their loved ones.

SB 1052 will also improve statutory authority and transparency for the authorized representative process by clarifying SCDD’s process for investigating and determining when an authorized representative is necessary to protect the rights of a person with IDD and provide clear direction on the duration of appointments. Clarifying this authority ensures fair, predictable, and person-centered implementation.



SUPPORT

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Sponsor)
Integrated Community Collaborative (ICC) (Sponsor)
The Arc & United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration (Sponsor)
Disability Voices United (Sponsor)

CONTACT

Kristen Millstein, (916) 651-4033
Policy Analyst
Office of Senator Lena Gonzalez
Kristen.Millstein@sen.ca.gov