



## DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT – JULY 2026 Christofer Arroyo

### Policy Update

#### Legislation

SCDD staff continued to monitor and analyze legislation, draft and submit position letters on bills approved by the Council, and provide public comment at legislative policy and fiscal committee hearings. SCDD successfully [sponsored two bills, AB 2360 \(Arambula\)](#) and [SB 1052 \(L. Gonzalez\)](#), and AB 2360 is still moving through the Legislature. The [Council has taken positions on 18 bills](#); nine remain live and could become law.

Staff also prepared updated legislative materials for the [June Legislative and Public Policy Committee meeting](#), including a bill chart, a presentation on the current status of the legislative process, and a draft of the Council's revised 2026–27 Policy Platform.

#### CA State Budget and Trailer Bill Language

During this reporting period, the [Governor's May Revise](#) to the budget was released. SCDD staff developed and distributed [a summary](#) of it, and presented it to SCDD regional advisory committees, coalitions, and community partners.

Many [trailer bills have been introduced](#) to implement the budget ("trailer bill language" or "TBL"), and SCDD staff have provided input consistent with SCDD's Guiding Principles for Budget-Related Advocacy to educate legislative staff and other decision-makers about the impact of the proposals and alternative language SCDD supports.

#### SCDD Policy and Legislation Webpage

SCDD launched a [Policy and Legislation webpage](#) that brings the Council's policy and legislative resources together in one location. The webpage includes Council-sponsored legislation, bills on which the Council has adopted positions, issue-based legislative reports, There Should Be a Law Contest reports, budget summaries, the Council's Policy Platform, the State Plan, and more. The webpage is intended to make

this information easier for Council members, advocates, families, and community partners to find and use.

### Chronic Absenteeism

The Council identified chronic absenteeism in schools as a policy project because students with disabilities may face attendance barriers related to their disabilities, health needs, or required services. SCDD continued its advocacy through the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) as it considered updates to the roles and training requirements for supervisors of attendance. SCDD and parent center staff [provided a presentation](#) to the SARB explaining the role of SCDD and parent centers, and the disability-related attendance barriers families experience. Additionally, SCDD staff provided public comment recommending explicit inclusion of IEPs and coordination among programs so schools are better equipped to identify and address disability-related barriers to attendance.

### SSI Marriage Penalty

The Council prioritized eliminating the SSI marriage penalty, which can restrict the ability of people with disabilities to marry, save, and achieve greater economic security. SCDD now supports six federal bills addressing related SSI reforms, including outdated asset limits and the marriage penalty.

### Paid Protected Sibling Leave

The Council prioritized exploring paid, job-protected leave for siblings who provide needed support to a family member. Research is being conducted into existing law and available policy options to determine whether additional legislation is necessary. Initial findings indicate that current law may already provide for paid, job-protected leave for siblings in many circumstances. Further research is underway to confirm the scope of the protections.

### Capitol Day of Action

Council members met with legislative offices and staff to explain the Council's priorities and advocate for Council-sponsored legislation. SCDD staff supported Council members during the visits and provided Spanish-language comments to a news outlet about the Council's advocacy and legislative priorities.

### Cost Effectiveness

The law requires DDS to develop a definition for "cost effective" by August 1, 2026. SCDD staff participated in a DDS stakeholder meeting concerning the proposed

definition and is collaborating with advocates to provide written comment to DDS. The SCDD Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs [provided a quote for an Undivided article](#) on this topic.

### There Should Be A Law Contest

SCDD announced the Sixth Annual There Should Be a Law Contest to identify legislative and policy ideas from the public. Ideas were accepted through June 30 and more than 200 ideas were received. Staff are presently preparing a report that will be widely distributed, and the submitted ideas will be considered for future legislative and policy projects.

### Coalition Meetings

SCDD participates in monthly coalition meetings to collaborate on efforts that strengthen systems serving individuals with I/DD and their families. Coalitions include ADHAC (Aging, Disability, and Homelessness Advocacy Coalition), Employment First, Inclusive College Association (ICA), the Office of Administrative Hearings' Fair Hearing Advisory Committee, DDS' Deaf Steering Committee, Fight for Our Health (focused on issues related to HR 1), and the Fair Hearing Reform Coalition. SCDD staff assist coalitions in various ways, including providing information and guidance, connecting partners to resources and individuals, and sharing coalition updates more broadly.

During this reporting period, SCDD staff facilitated a meeting between the ICA and the California Center for Inclusive College to address regional center vendorization barriers and improve coordination among developmental services, vocational rehabilitation, and postsecondary programs.

### Policy and Educational Resources

SCDD staff updated the 2026–27 Policy Platform and primers on SCDD and the systems impacting those we serve. These resources support public education, legislative outreach, and consistent communication of Council priorities.

## **Communications Update**

Outreach reaches 15,000–23,000 unique email addresses and frequently includes distribution through social media, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and occasionally other platforms.

## Monthly News & Events Email Blasts

Each month, SCDD highlights timely events, information, Council projects, trainings, and partner resources through its statewide email newsletter.

- May: Featured Mental Health Awareness Month, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Older Americans Month, and National Wildfire Awareness Month. Promoted statewide mental health and co-occurring I/DD trainings and panel discussions in English and Spanish, Medicaid Town Halls, the Undivided Legislative and Budget Update, Council meetings, and ongoing Self-Determination Program orientations.
- June: Highlighted the Regional Center Services Resource Page, the Sixth Annual There Should Be a Law Contest, federal special education updates, the US Department of Justice's opinion regarding the "integration mandate", and California's investment in the Statewide Special Education Parent Action Network. Partner outreach recognized the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Olmstead decision and reinforced community living and disability rights.
- July, developed and distributed in June: Produced SCDD's Disability Pride Month newsletter featuring the history and symbolism of the Disability Pride flag, six Storytellers Blog profiles, statewide Disability Pride panel discussions in English and Spanish, and the Relationships Decoded webinar series.

## Public Engagement and Advocacy Opportunities (English/Spanish)

Alerts provided opportunities for Californians to engage in public policy, participate in trainings, and stay informed on issues affecting people with I/DD. Communications were distributed in English and Spanish when applicable.

- There Should Be a Law Contest: Promoted the sixth annual contest through multiple bilingual outreach efforts to encourage community members to submit legislative ideas that improve the lives of people with I/DD and their families.
- Statewide Special Education Parent Action Network: Developed and distributed communications announcing California's investment in the network and explaining SCDD's role in strengthening family advocacy, protecting students' rights, and supporting systemic change.
- Federal Special Education Updates: Shared information regarding proposed federal changes affecting special education and disability rights, helping families understand potential impacts on educational supports, services, and civil-rights enforcement.

- US Department of Justice’s Opinion on the Integration Mandate: Shared information about the opinion, helping readers understand what it says and what they can do.
- Training and Partner Outreach: Supported communications for Mental Health Awareness Month, Medicaid Town Halls, the Undivided Legislative and Budget Update provided by Executive Director Carruthers, and the 27th anniversary of the Olmstead decision.

### Promotion of Council Projects and Legislative Education

Communications advanced Council priorities through public education, legislative outreach, accessible resources, and creative design.

- [Regional Center Services Resource Page](#): Promoted the resource page through newsletters, social media, and outreach materials to increase awareness of services, supports, and eligibility information.
- Policy Platform and Educational Resources: Developed branding, public-facing communications, and educational materials supporting the Council’s 2026–27 Policy Platform, SCDD 101, and Developmental Disabilities 101.
- Capitol Day of Action: Developed legislative education and advocacy materials to help Council members communicate SCDD priorities and sponsored legislation during meetings with legislative offices.
- Inclusive Postsecondary Education Day: Developed and promoted communications recognizing California’s progress in expanding inclusive higher education opportunities and workforce pathways for students with I/DD.
- Council-Sponsored Legislation: Developed social media materials supporting [AB 2360](#), the Council’s plain language bill, and a draft social media toolkit for [SB 1052](#) concerning authorized representation.

### Digital Media and Community Engagement

- Disability Pride Month: Developed communications and promotional materials supporting statewide events, Storytellers Blog profiles, panel discussions, webinars, and educational resources.
- Farmworker Appreciation Day: Created and promoted an accessible social media carousel recognizing the contributions of California farmworkers.

- Storytellers Blog: Amplified employment success stories demonstrating how individualized supports can advance competitive integrated employment, independence, and inclusion.

### Recruitment and Partner Support

Communications provided messaging, creative design, and promotional support for Council programs, statewide trainings, regional offices, partner organizations, and public engagement, helping expand awareness of services, legislative priorities, and educational opportunities throughout California.