



Legislative and Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes June 23, 2026

Attending Members

Harold Fujita (FA), Chair
Azucena Garcia-Ferro (SA)
Bob Twomey (FA)
Irene Valdez (FA)
Jessica Brown (FA)
Kim Rothschild (FA)
Lupe Rodriguez (FA)
Sascha Bittner (SA)

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Austin Murphy
Brian Hoang
Christofer Arroyo
David Delgado
Jua Perez
Robin Maitino-Erben
Samindra Wijesiriwardane
Veronica Bravo

Members Absent

Andy Imparato (DRC)
Melissa Fitch (FA)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Harold Fujita [FA] called the meeting to order at 10:32 AM

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

A quorum was established.

3. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

Legend:

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FA = Family Advocate

DRC = Disability Rights California

* = 2 Year Bill

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2026 MEETING MINUTES

It was moved/seconded (Bittner [SA]/Twomey [FA]) and carried to approve the March 2026 meeting minutes as presented. (Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. [See page one for a record of members present]).

6. LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Christofer Arroyo reviewed where bills stand now that they have moved to the second house, and the deadlines remaining in 2026: July 2 for policy committees to meet and report bills, August 31 for each house to pass bills, and September 30 for the Governor to sign or withhold signature.

Mr. Arroyo noted that the Council's six areas of work are now called projects rather than priorities: authorized representation, plain language, chronic absenteeism, special education work opportunities, the SSI marriage penalty, and paid protected sibling leave. Staff identified six federal bills addressing the SSI marriage penalty, and the Council registered support for all six using the delegated authority of the Council and the LPPC chair.

Member Discussion

SSI Marriage Penalty: Sascha Bittner [SA] asked whether any of the federal bills were authored by a California member of Congress. Mr. Arroyo identified HR 1389 (Panetta) and HR 1757 (Valadao) as the two California authors.

Paid Protected Sibling Leave: Kim Rothschild [FA] asked whether siblings advocating for this project would have a conflict of interest, and whether other states had adopted similar policies. Mr. Arroyo said he did not believe a conflict exists, comparing it to members who receive services and still make decisions about those systems, and noted that staff had not yet surveyed other states because the project was initially assumed to require a California law. He added that existing law may already provide this protection and that staff are seeking legal opinions before determining next steps.

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7. STATE LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET UPDATES

Sponsored Bills

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Christofer Arroyo reported that SB 1052 (Gonzalez), on authorized representation, was held in Senate Appropriations and did not advance; staff continue to process backup appointment requests, roughly 50 to date, and are weighing other options.

AB 2360 (Arambula), on plain language, was heard the morning of the meeting and placed on the consent calendar. If enacted, it would define plain language, require state agencies to produce plain language documents beginning January 1, 2027, and designate a senior official in each agency to ensure compliance.

Reviewed Bills

Mr. Arroyo reviewed the bills on which the Council holds a position, by subject area: Civil Rights (SB 84*, opposed); Education (AB 1861, SB 244*, SB 1222); Health (AB 308*, AB 350*, AB 1561, AB 1670, AB 2081, AB 2096, SB 363*, SB 1226); Informal and Formal Community Supports (AB 1099*, AB 1220*, AB 2209, SB 969); and Safety (SB 837).

He noted that SB 969 and AB 308* were each gutted and amended, and that AB 308* now directs DDS to conduct a statewide study of safety training services for people with IDD.

Committee Member Discussion

SB 244: Azucena Garcia-Ferro [SA] asked whether the bill reaches community college districts, noting that many students with disabilities start at a community college before transferring. Mr. Arroyo confirmed that the bill requires the California State University system to cover the cost of assessments and requests the same of the UC Regents, but does not extend to community colleges, since the Legislature can direct the CSU directly while the UC Regents are independent. Ms. Garcia-Ferro asked that extending the bill to community colleges be considered in the future, and Mr. Arroyo said that could be raised with the bill author.

AB 308: Chair Harold Fujita asked why AB 308* no longer appeared among the health bills. Mr. Arroyo confirmed that it had been gutted

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and amended into a safety bill and would be covered under that category.

Budget Update

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Christofer Arroyo then provided a budget update, reporting that the Legislature met its June 15 deadline and that the Governor must sign by June 29. He noted no significant cuts to the DD system, continued funding for DDS caseload growth and the LOIS data system, legislative rejection of the May Revise IHSS cuts and county cost shifts, and continuation of the \$2.3 billion special education increase.

The full presentation can be found at the following link: [Presentation](#).

8. 2027–2031 LEGISLATIVE POLICY PLATFORM

Committee Chair Harold Fujita opened the agenda item by noting that the committee has traditionally reviewed its legislative platform annually and expressed the benefit of aligning the platform with the Council's five-year State Plan. He then invited Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Christofer Arroyo to lead the item.

Mr. Arroyo presented the proposed 2027-2031 Policy Platform, stating that it aligns with the State Plan beginning October 1 to match the federal fiscal year and would remain in effect for five years, with amendments permitted as needed. He reviewed the preamble and each subject area, noting that every section identifies the relevant law or principle, its impact on people with IDD and their families, and the Council's corresponding action

The proposed platform can be found at the following link: [Proposed Policy Platform 2027-2031](#).

Members commended the intentional use of State Plan language woven throughout the document, noting that it keeps the platform easy to follow and dovetails with the State Plan.

It was moved/seconded (Bittner [SA]/Twomey [FA]) and carried to recommend that the Council adopt the legislative policy platform as presented, to take effect October 1, 2026. (Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote, with one member absent for the vote: Garcia-Ferro. [See page one for a record of members present]).

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9. UPDATES AND STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

Executive Director Aaron Carruthers reviewed a recent U.S. Department of Justice opinion on the Olmstead decision and the integration mandate, which he had circulated to members by email. He summarized its conclusions that Olmstead addressed unjustified institutionalization rather than requiring maximum integration, that the ADA and Rehabilitation Act do not impose a universal integration mandate, and that the regulations carrying out the mandate should be rescinded.

He noted the opinion directs federal agencies to follow its interpretation, that it focuses on people in state institutions and people with psychiatric disabilities, and that it acknowledges it may be litigated.

The opinion can be found at the following link: [DOJ Olmstead Opinion](#).

Members discussed strategies for response:

Sascha Bittner [SA] asked what the Council could do to communicate the value of home and community-based care, particularly during Disability Pride Month, and Mr. Carruthers pointed to California's response to a federal request for evidence on program integrity as a resource.

Chair Harold Fujita [FA] shared his experience as the parent of two adult sons with IDD, described his older son's transition from a developmental center to a community home, and said he would write to California's United States Senators and suggested partnering with organizations advocating for people with mental illness.

Irene Valdez [FA] reported contacting her federal representatives and sharing information through social media and her autism support group.

Kim Rothschild [FA] shared an alert regarding a congressional hearing on Medicaid program integrity.

Mr. Carruthers then reported that special education functions moving out of the U.S. Department of Education would go to the Administration for Community Living, and specifically to the Administration on Disability, where DD Councils are housed.

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10. MEMBER UPDATES

Committee member Kim Rothschild [FA] asked whether there is still time to submit ideas for next session's legislation. Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Christofer Arroyo replied that ideas go to LPPC in late August or early September and to the Council in September, so fact sheets can be developed before bill ideas are taken to legislators in October, and that late ideas sent to policy@scdd.ca.gov would still be considered.

Executive Director Aaron Carruthers added that some bills ~~items~~ are being placed on a two-year timeline because the next Governor will not take office until January.

Public Comment

Jua Perez, a member of the public, thanked the committee for the opportunity to attend and said she joins these meetings to sharpen her advocacy skills. She shared that her son was onboarded into the Self-Determination Program on June 1, roughly fifteen to sixteen months after she completed the certification, and credited her independent facilitator, her caseworker, and Support for Families of Children with Disabilities for their help.

She described how difficult it is for a parent in crisis to learn what services exist, noting that a person in crisis can only think about immediate needs, and said she wants to help other parents who do not know these resources exist.

Following her comments, Mr. Carruthers demonstrated the Council's new regional center services website, which launched at the end of May after roughly a decade of development, and showed how a search returns the services a person can ask a regional center about.

11. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ADJOURNMENT

The next LPPC meetings are scheduled for September 10 and October 13, 2026. The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 PM.

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