



California Association for the Retarded

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April 25, 2005

The Honorable Noreen Evans, Chair
Assembly Human Services Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Support for AB 1379 (Agnews Developmental Center Property) - April 26, 2005 Hearing

Dear Assemblymember Evans:

The California Association for the Retarded (CAR) has taken a **support** position on **AB 1379 (Lieber)**, as amended April 11, 2005. This bill would retain the property at the Agnews Developmental Center to be available to use to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

CAR is a statewide parent organization with 10 local units that include family advocacy organizations, operators of day programs, and parent groups at state developmental centers. CAR advocates for choice, maintenance of a continuum of services and greater parent/family involvement in decision-making processes affecting sons and daughters with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.

Pursuant to provisions of existing law, the State Department of Developmental Services has submitted a plan to close Agnews Developmental Center by June 30, 2007. Under existing law, the property will be declared surplus and transferred to the management of the Department of General Services (DGS). DGS then will take the lead in determining the future of the land and marketing it for the "highest and best use."

Given the critical need for housing and services for people with developmental disabilities in the Bay Area (as well as throughout the state), it would be very short-sighted for the state not to retain this land for use by the developmental services community. We have repeatedly stated our belief that the state should hold the land for possible uses such as a Bay Area resource center (to provide specialized health care, custom-fitted equipment, emergency intervention and/or crisis services) or a north state forensic facility for people with developmental disabilities, among other possible uses.

Given the location and cost of the land, it is not reasonable to assume that the state will be able to repurchase it or an equivalent when needs arise. This includes not only services for people transitioning out of Agnews but for others already living in the community who are not being adequately served by existing service arrangements. We ask for your eye vote in **support of AB 1379**.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman, President

cc: Members of the Assembly Human Services Committee, Assemblymember Sally Lieber, DDS