



California Association for the Retarded

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May 17, 2005

The Honorable Judy Chu, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**May 18, 2005 Hearing: Support for AB 1379 (Lieber) as amended 4-28-05
(Dealing with Agnews Developmental Center Property)**

Dear Assemblymember Chu:

The California Association for the Retarded (CAR) has taken a **support** position on **AB 1379 (Lieber)**, as amended April 28, 2005. This bill would prohibit any lands at the Agnews Developmental Center campus from being classified as surplus without express legislative authorization. It further would establish an advisory group to provide the Legislature with recommendations regarding how the land or its value could be used for 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 (DDS) 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 aye vote in **support of AB 1379**.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman, President

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