Action Alert #8
Senate Finance to Hear Two Issues:
Cameras in Special Education Classrooms &
Public Testimony on the Budget

May 13, 2021

Two important issues being heard in Senate Finance next week!

Monday, May 17th

Senate Finance meets at 9:30 AM in Room A-B to consider SB86 and hear public testimony on HB1 (Agenda)

**Issue One:**
Requiring Cameras in Special Education Classrooms Upon Request

- Senate Education passed an amended version of SB86 by Senator Foil on May 10th.
- If passed, SB86 would require cameras to be installed in self-contained special education classrooms upon request.
- Students with disabilities, particularly students who are non-verbal, are at greater risk of abuse and do not have the communication skills to self-report this abuse.
- Parents want peace of mind that their children are treated with dignity and care behind closed doors of special education classrooms.
- Video and audio surveillance increases student safety, protects educators from false accusations, and promotes improved training to address challenging student behavior.
- Click here for more information about requiring cameras in special education classrooms upon request

**Issue Two:**
Public Testimony Being Heard on the State’s Fiscal Year 2022 Budget (Begins July 1)

- The House passed an amended budget bill (HB1) on May 6th. The good news is, in its current form, the budget does include the following:
  - Approximately $16.3 million in state general fund (SGF) to increase HCBS rates
  - Implementation costs of dental coverage for individuals with developmental disabilities should HB172 be enacted into law
  - 500 additional Community Choices Waiver slots for seniors and those with adult onset disabilities
- Unfortunately, HB1 does not include the following:
  - Additional $500,000 in SGF for the Families Helping Families (FHF) Regional Resource Centers
  - Full $27.9 million SGF needed to increase HCBS rates by $2.00 for those services provided by DSWs and a minimum starting pay requirement of at least $8.65 per hour for DSWs
If one or both of these issues are important to you or someone you know, take action NOW!

**How to Take Action**
Share your personal story and explain how requiring cameras in self-contained special education classrooms (issue one) and/or additional funding for FHF Centers and increased home- and community-based service (HCBS) rates (issue two) would affect you, your family or someone you know.

1. **Email or call** the Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee by Monday, May 17th!
   Find your member of the Senate Finance Committee at the end of this alert.
2. **Email** sfnce@legis.la.gov your public comments about one or both of the issues above:
   - Only statements emailed to the address above and received at least 3 hours prior to the meeting will be included in the record for this committee meeting.
   - With your comments, please ensure to include your name, address, phone number, email address, and bill number (SB86 - Cameras in Special Education Classrooms / HB1 - Funding for Disability Services and Resources).

As the Council and LaCAN continue to practice COVID-19 mitigation efforts, we will not hold official Yellow Shirt Days in-person at this time and encourage everyone to advocate safely.

**Get Involved Virtually**
- Watch committee meetings live from the legislature’s website. When the meeting is in progress, click the camera icon to access the broadcast.
- Host committee watch parties on social media and/or post a video sharing your personal story
  - Tag your friends, representatives, senators, and policymakers
  - Use hashtags #LaDDC, #lalege, #LaCAN
- Email, tweet, message, etc. members of the committee before and during the committee meeting and share how the issues above will impact you/your loved ones

**Tips & Tools for Advocacy**
Looking for tips and tools to help you in your advocacy? Check out the Council’s Advocacy 101 page. You can also find tips for:
- Writing/emailing your legislators
- Calling your legislators
- Writing your story

**Confirm Your Action**
- Email your LaCAN Leader after you take action
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

**Contact Us**
LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108
email: info@laddc.org
website: www.lacanadvocates.org
facebook: www.facebook.com/LaDDCouncil
twitter: www.twitter.com/LaDDCouncil

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View all recent LaCAN Alerts HERE.
Find your member of the Senate Finance Committee!

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Committee Members are sorted by region. Find your region!

Louisiana Regions