



A Note From The Los Angeles Coalition of Service Providers, Sponsor of AB 279, Holden

September 5, 2017

Dear Supporters of AB 279:

We worked as hard as we could to educate and persuade our legislature to pass AB279. But, ultimately, the Senate Appropriations Committee capitulated to a very powerful Governor who declared that he would not allow AB279 to become law.

While our first emotion might well be disappointment – followed quickly by anger, our first action must be to thank our friends all over the State who stood up for people with developmental disabilities and their rights to services guaranteed by the Lanterman Act.

We salute our AB279 author, Assemblymember Chris Holden and each coauthor. We thank all of the more than one hundred organizations from every corner of the State for your support. Most importantly, we pledge to every one of the thousands of individuals who spoke, wrote and marched, that we will build on the energy and momentum that you have generated.

The promise of the Lanterman Act is no more than words on paper if our State refuses to provide resources to implement it. Refusing to provide resources to pay for the legal minimum wage in communities from San Diego to San Francisco is a direct attack on the rights to services for people living in all of these areas. But, more ominously it is a precedent that threatens the future of services for all Californians with developmental disabilities.

A refusal to provide resources to meet such an absolute floor of necessary costs means that true access to quality services is not guaranteed by the Lanterman Act. Refusing to fund such an obvious necessity as legal minimum wage means this administration considers the Lanterman Act nothing more than another discretionary State spending program. If we let this precedent stand, then we have lost the entitlement that our predecessors fought so hard to establish. We cannot and we will not let this happen.

And so, we have no time to look backward, only forward. As Assemblymember Holden put it, “The Lanterman Act is no stronger than our collective will to act when it is threatened.” Our collective will is much stronger today because of all of you. And so let’s build on this. Let’s make defense of the Lanterman Act personal. Let’s get in to the district offices of each and every Assemblymember and Senator. Let’s explain in human terms they will understand, why they must stand up for their constituents with developmental disabilities. If we are successful, then we won’t be holding our breath next September because the Budget our Governor signs in June will honor California’s promise to its citizens with developmental disabilities.