**Communication and Collaboration Committee Meeting**

February 14, 2025

Draft Meeting Minutes

Action Items:

* Ms. Viramontes-Nhan will share links to resources tracking legal challenges to administrative actions on the Federal level.
* Ms. Viramontes-Nhan will share information about the Texas V. Becerra lawsuit with C and C members.

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions

Roque Alas Bucton – C and C Chair

Ligia Andrade Zuniga – SILC Chair/Executive Director, Center for Independence of Individuals with Disabilities (CID)

Anisa Escobedo – SILC Vice Chair/C and C Member

Rian Dindzans – C and C Member/SILC Member

Nicole Zacarias – Public Policy Coordinator, Independent Living Center of Kern County (ILCKC)

Allison Viramontes-Nhan – SILC Legislative Specialist

Danielle Hess – SILC Office Manager

1. Public Comment

None

1. SILC Member Updates

Mx. Dindzans shared that in addition to continuing their work with the Bay Area Outreach Recreation Program (BORP), they are involved with research about Disability Cultural Centers at California Universities. They will be presenting their research at a conference soon.

Ms. Escobedo is now self-employed as Escobedo Designs and working on a Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) program. She will continue to work in the Independent Living community.

Mr. Alas Bucton has been attending Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Coalition meetings representing himself, and they are currently mobilizing to make sure that Medi-Cal and Medicare funding for LTSS and In-Home Services and Supports (IHSS) continues.

1. Approval of the Draft Minutes from October 11, 2024, Communication and Collaboration Committee Meeting

Ms. Escobedo motioned for approval of the Draft Minutes from October 11, 2024, and Mx. Dindzans seconded the motion. This passed unanimously through a roll call vote.

1. Legislation Update
   1. Updates Regarding The White House Office of Management and Budget Grant Freeze

SILC Executive Director Carrie England was unable to attend the meeting but staff shared her notes that the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), and National Association of State Independent Living Councils (NASILC) are monitoring the situation and will communicate any changes. It is unknown if a potential closure of the Department of Education would have an impact on the Designated State Entity (DSE).

While individual education and advocacy can be useful, SILC members should keep in mind that they are not allowed to lobby in their role as SILC members. SILC Staff are happy to help members find their local representatives and develop their communication. Ms. Viramontes-Nhan will share some links to organizations that are tracking legal challenges to federal administrative actions.

Mr. Alas Bucton spoke about the appointment of Robert F. Kennedy Junior as Secretary of Health and Human Services, which he is monitoring for necessary action. Ms. Escobedo met with a field representative in Humboldt to share her concerns about how people with disabilities can be affected by policy changes.

* 1. Legislative Items for Review

Ms. Viramontes-Nhan has been in contact with members of the Disability Caucus within the California Legislature, but it is still too early in the Legislative season for there to be updates on activities. She will continue to follow up as the Legislative Session progresses.

* + 1. For Consideration Bills

SB 84 (Niello) Disability access: construction-related accessibility claims: notice of violation and opportunity to correct. STATUS: 1/29/25 Referred to Senate Judiciary and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Ms. Escobedo motioned to move SB84 to the SILC Legislative watchlist, and Mx. Dindzans seconded the motion. This passed unanimously through a roll call vote.

* + 1. Watchlist Bills

There were no bills on the Watchlist prior to the vote on SB 84. Ms. Viramontes-Nhan encourages members to bring forward bills that they think are relevant to the work of the SILC, and if they are brought forward at least 48 hours before the C and C meeting she can include them in the Legislative Updates.

* 1. Legislative Items for Consideration from SILC Members
     1. State or Federal Legislation:

Ms. Viramontes-Nhan shared information about A.J.T. v. Osseo Area Schools, which deals with the standards that students must meet to bring claims of disability discrimination at school. This case is expected to be heard by the Supreme Court in April, and she will continue to share updates about this case.

Members discussed the Texas Vs. Becerra lawsuit, which is a court case in which 17 states have sued the United States Government to eliminate Section 504 and the new rules under it which protect people with disabilities from discrimination in health care and human services. California is not a part of this lawsuit, but residents may be able to encourage the Attorney General to submit an amicus brief to support Section 504. Ms. Viramontes-Nhan will share more information about this lawsuit with C and C members by email.

Final updates included information about the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) raising the ABLE Account deposit limits, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) finalizing a rule narrowing the definition of “custody” for the purposes of Medicare eligibility, and the decision by the United States Census Bureau to not move forward with proposed changes to how the Census asks people about their disabilities.

1. Legislative Visits

Ms. Viramontes-Nhan is working with members to schedule Legislative visits alongside the SILC meeting in Sacramento on April 1 and 2. She will hold a pre-meeting with each participant where she shares more specific information. Mr. Alas Bucton recommended that she incorporate role play into the orientation for newer members, and she agreed that it is a helpful suggestion.

1. Summary of Activities Requiring Follow-Up at Next Meeting
   1. Next Meeting March 14, 2025

Both Ms. England and Ms. Viramontes-Nhan will be out of the office traveling during this meeting, but Ms. Hess is happy to provide administrative support and share written updates if the committee chooses to meet. Members decided to move forward with scheduling a meeting for March 14.

1. Adjourn