



April 11, 2024

The Honorable Tom Umberg
California State Senate District 34
1021 O Street, Suite 6530
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 939 (Umberg) Educational equity: schoolsite and community resources: neurodivergent pupils - Support

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write to you in support of SB 939, which aims to raise neurodivergence awareness within the general student population of all California schools by amending the Education Code to include protections for neurodivergent students.

The population of neurodivergent youth is rapidly increasing, largely impacting educational institutions. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2021–22, the number of students ages 3–21 receiving Individuals with Disabilities Education Act services in the United States increased from 6.4 million in the 2010–11 school year to 7.3 million in the 2021–22 school year. Taken as a percentage of total public school enrollment, this equates to an increase from 13 to 15 percent of all students.

Neurodivergent youth are often the prevalent victims of bullying, and the number of neurodivergent youth is higher in California compared to other areas. For example, according to the Journal of Attention Disorders, nearly half of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are victims of bullying — more than double the amount of bullying experienced by neurotypical peers. Additionally, the autism diagnosis rate in California is 1:26, much higher than the national average of 1:36. Although the numbers have risen over the years, there has not been sufficient priority placed on building awareness and education.

SB 939 directly addresses the need for higher levels of awareness regarding neurodivergence within the general student body by requiring local educational agencies to incorporate comprehensive policies, establish clear complaint procedures, and provide adequate resources for neurodivergent students.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 939.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yoder', is positioned above the printed name.

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Chair and Members, Senate Education Committee