

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 1261 (Laird)
As Amended August 6, 2026
2/3 vote. Urgency

SUMMARY

Prohibits the California Department of Aging (CDA) from revoking the designation of an Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) program solely due to the revocation or voluntary revocation of a designation, suspension or temporary inability of either the area agency on aging (AAA) or the independent living center (ILC) partner to serve in its operator role and would authorize the remaining partner to continue to operate as an ADRC independently during the transition period.

This measure will take effect immediately.

COMMENTS

Area Agencies on Aging: CDA administers programs serving older adults through contracts with local agencies in 33 locations across the state which provide a wide array of services on a community level to seniors and adults with disabilities. AAAs are designated to address the needs and concerns of older adults at the regional and local level. Each county is required to have an AAA to ensure all communities have access to local aging programs and provide information and services for older adults. While California is home to 58 counties, not all counties have a stand-alone AAA. Some AAAs represent multiple counties to serve the region. Not all AAAs provide ADRC services.

Independent Living Centers (ILCs): ILCs serve people with any kind of disability in a local community who can benefit from services and are designed and operated by a majority of people with disabilities. The independent living movement uses people first language, such as "people with disabilities" instead of "disabled people". This shows that the person is most important, not the disability. If a person with a disability wants to ask for help, they can. But the kind of help they ask for and who they ask is up to them. This way of thinking is often described as "self-determination". There are eight core services provided by ILCs:

- 1) Information and Referral (I&R)
- 2) Advocacy
- 3) Independent Living Skills
- 4) Peer Counseling
- 5) Transition and Diversion
- 6) Personal Assistance Services
- 7) Housing
- 8) Assistive Technology

There are 28 Independent Living Centers in California.¹ Not all ILCs provide ADRC services.

Aging and Disability Resource Connections: ADRCs serve as single points of entry into the LTSS system for older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, veterans and families. ADRCs are the access point model of California's "no wrong door" system.

The vision behind ADRCs is to establish, in every community, highly visible and trusted sources of information where people of all incomes and ages can turn for the full range of long-term support options and smooth access to public long-term support programs and benefits. Rather than new entities or bricks-and-mortar locations, ADRCs build on the state and community's existing resources on aging and disability. On the aging side, locally this means AAAs and on the disability side, ILCs.

ADRCs provide unbiased, reliable information and counseling to individuals with all levels of income. They assist a wide range of individuals, including family caregivers, in accessing LTSS in the most desirable and appropriate setting. Since ADRCs do not limit their services to low-income individuals, they can help families of all income levels get the help they need as well as to utilize their resources more wisely, which may delay or prevent unnecessary institutionalization.²

A variety of supportive services are available through ADRCs. Anyone regardless of age, income and disability may receive services. These services may include:

- 1) Enhanced Information and Referral Services: Comprehensive resource information, follow-ups, and referrals via "warm hand-offs."
- 2) Options Counseling: Assist in identifying goals and needs through person-centered counseling and coordinating access to public and private-funded LTSS in the community.
- 3) Short-Term Service Coordination: Expedited access to services and supports for individuals at risk of institutionalization, generally for 90 days or less, until a longer-term plan is in place.
- 4) Transition Services: For people who are currently in a hospital, nursing facility, or other institution and wishes to receive LTSS at home or in a community-based setting.³

Recent disruptions in the AAA Network:

Planning and Service Area (PSA) 17/San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties:

- 1) On December 16, 2025, the CDA Issued a "Notice of Intent to Revoke the AAA Designation of Central Coast Commission for Seniors." The notice wrote, in part "On November 11, 2025, the AAA informed CDA it does not have sufficient funds to continue operations after December 31, 2025. Therefore, CDA anticipates that the AAA will be unable to continue to serve the aging population with various critical services after December 31, 2025, posing an immediate threat to the safety, health, and/or welfare of the individuals being served." The

¹ <https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/IndependentLiving>

² <https://acl.gov/programs/connecting-people-services/aging-and-disability-resource-centers-programno-wrong-door>

³ https://aging.ca.gov/Programs_and_Services/Aging_and_Disability_Resource_Connection/

CDA was scheduled to hold a public hearing on February 2 of this year to "gather testimony, opinions, and information from all interested parties, including the general public, about the revocation of AAA designation of Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens...

revocation is being initiated due to concerns regarding the AAA's conduct, including but not limited to its failure to comply with the requirements of the Older Americans Act and fiscal mismanagement."

- 2) On January 28, 2026, Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens notified CDA of its decision to voluntarily withdraw its AAA designation. The public hearing scheduled for February 2, 2026, was canceled because of this voluntary withdrawal. CDA has administratively continued the contract for the ADRC and carried out a formal process to designate a new AAA in PSA 17. A transition plan has not been made public, but earlier information stated the new PSA would take over October 1, 2026.

Planning and Service Area 18/ Ventura County: On March 3, 2026, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors voted to pause the planned transition of AAA services from County administration. The Board directed staff to further evaluate service delivery options and, in doing so, reaffirmed the County's commitment to continue administering OAA and OCA programs through July 1, 2027. This action reversed Ventura County's September 29, 2025 notification to CDA that it intended to discontinue providing AAA services effective July 1, 2026.

According to the Author

"Senate Bill 1261 ensures continuation of essential aging and disability services by allowing Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRCs) to continue operations even if an Area Agency on Aging or Independent Living Center partner can no longer serve in its operator role. In doing so, this bill keeps the doors open, including for ARDCs serving San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties, and ensures no one falls through the cracks during transitions where a new partner must be established.

Older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers rely on ADRCs as trusted places to turn for help. We cannot allow services to disappear simply because of an administrative transition."

Arguments in Support

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, a sponsor of the bill, writes "SB 1261 addresses a critical gap in current law by ensuring that ADRCs can continue operating during periods of transition when an AAA or ILC is no longer able to serve in its designated role. Without this fix, ADRCs – designed as a "No Wrong Door" system – are at risk of shutting down entirely, leaving older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers without access to essential services."

The Santa Barbabra County Board of Supervisors adds in support, "Maintaining consistent access to information and support is particularly important for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and the caregivers who assist them. SB 1261 aligns with the County's policy commitment to strengthen services that promote the safety, health, and well-being of older adults and individuals with disabilities, including the vital support provided by family, friends, and professional caregivers."

The County of Santa Clara writes in further support, "The need for the centralized resource hub for long-term care that the ADRC designation provides is high in Santa Clara County. By 2030,

the number of adult residents over age 65 is projected to grow to 20% of the County's population. A 2023 study by the County's Department of Aging and Adult Services, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors, recommended the establishment of ADRC-type services to improve caregiving and quality of life for older adults and their families in the County."

Arguments in Opposition

None.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, "CDA indicates negligible administrative costs."

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1**

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Dahle

ASM AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE: 7-0-0

YES: Ahrens, Ellis, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Jeff Gonzalez, Blanca Rubio, Sharp-Collins

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: August 6, 2026

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