

Honorable Carol Liu, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee

Honorable Jim Beall, Chair
Assembly Human Services Committee

My name is Bob Watson. I am the associate director of Project Independence, a provider of a full range of supports for adults with developmental disabilities in Orange County. I also represent services providers to the Regional Center of Orange County's board of directors as Vendor Advisory Committee liaison as legislated by the Lanterman Act. I was elected by the vendors to serve as their representative. RCOC meets monthly with all of the different vendor groups to discuss any concerns they might have—consistent feedback assures an atmosphere of openness and allows us to resolve problems as they arise.

The concerns about favoritism in vendor selection and rate negotiations as detailed in the BSA report are not systemic. Our experience in Orange County is very positive—vendors work in partnership with the regional center to address challenges in our community and the relationship is marked by transparency, openness, and mutual accountability. This is the local control, accountability and responsiveness envisioned by the Lanterman Act.

While no system is perfect or error-free, there are effective checks and balances to detect and correct problems. I ask that the Legislature, when responding to the BSA report, not layer on more bureaucratic rules or requirements that would add cost and complexity to the regional center system, but yield no meaningful improvements in consumer service, transparency, or accountability.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective both as a service provider and as a spokesperson for the vendor community in Orange County.