MEETING MATERIAL (11/17/25)

Fourth Disability Terminology Working Group Meeting
November 17, 2025, 12:00 noon

Goal for this meeting

The California Law Revision Commission is extremely grateful to the AB 1906 Working Group members for their continued participation in this matter.

The Commission staff hopes to present at the Commission's December 4, 2025, meeting one or more substitute terms that are supported by a significant number of Working Group members.

Substitute Term Candidates

Two substitute terms have garnered the most support among all terms suggested, although both terms have also generated some relatively strong opposition from one or more group members:

(1) "**[person/adult] with a support need**," and

(2) "**[person/adult] with a functional limitation**."

As a result, Commission staff recommends the Working Group also consider as possibilities the following substitute terms that might blend the positive aspects of the two terms listed above, while hopefully eliminating the bases for objection:

(3) "**[person/adult] with a functional support need**"

(4) "**[person/adult] needing functional support**"

(5) "**[person/adult] needing functional accommodation.**"

Finally, a Working Group member has offered another possible substitute term, detailed in a letter that was attached to the email announcing the date and time of the meeting, which was sent to you yesterday:

(6) "**[person/adult] with a disability as defined in Section [number of code section presenting the applicable definition]**."

Meeting Procedure

1. After an initial welcome, the Commission staff will ask if anyone would like to suggest additional terms for consideration.

2. The Commission staff will then ask for a preliminary show of hands for each term, and ask—

(a) If the term is a Group member's first choice, and
(b) If a Group member is *opposed* to the term, and if so, a brief explanation why.

3. The Commission staff will then ask each Working Group member and any attending members of the public to identify and briefly discuss their top two choices.

Post Meeting

As indicated, Commission staff plans to report to the Commission the Working Group's view on substitute terms at the Commission's meeting on December 4, 2025. The staff report for this meeting will be posted on the AB 1906 study page. Please sign up for updates at the link on the bottom of this page.

Members of the public, and certainly all members of this Working Group, are welcome to submit written or oral comments for the Commission's consideration at any time. Written comments should be submitted to scohen@clrc.ca.gov and oral comments may be presented at Commission meetings in person or via teleconference.

Information relating to the upcoming meeting is available here.

Finally, Commission staff and the Commission will continue to work on both a tentative and eventual final recommendation to the Legislature in this study over the next several months. The Commission staff may reach out for further input from this Working Group.

The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration

October 28, 2025

Steve Cohen
Senior Staff Counsel
California Law Revision Commission

Dear Steve:

As we discussed yesterday, here is The Arc & UCP California Collaboration's suggestion for a simple term to replace "dependent adults/persons" in the 140 code sections that use that term. Thank you for your offer to distribute it to the working group members to give them time to consider it before the next meeting, and for offering others the chance to submit any other terms they may prefer.

After considering the difficult, sometimes painful process the work group has been through, we decided to suggest a term that's simpler than any the work group has seriously considered to date -- ***"an adult/person with a disability as defined in Section*** ___," followed with the relevant code section number.

We're suggesting this term because I finally realized after the last work group meeting that both of the other terms that the work group has been discussing, including the one I was advocating, have significant drawbacks. Both of them, somewhat like "dependent persons/adults," implicitly leave out some people that the definitions cover, likely perpetuating the current problems of law enforcement officers, social workers, government employees, lawyers, and even people with disabilities ourselves overlooking the legal protections that the law affords us. And both are offensive to some of the work group members.

We believe "an adult/person with a disability" would have these strengths:

1. "People with disabilities" is the common term in the disability community, doesn't leave out anyone that the definitions cover, and probably isn't offensive to anyone.

2. Adding "as define in Section ___" clearly tells any reader to look up the actual definition as used in that particular section, which will be a bit different than the definition in some other sections. It might even call everyone's attention to the fact of multiple definitions in current state and federal law and might encourage them to look up the definition whenever they encounter the term, actually reducing a bit of any current confusion.

3. The Legislature used the term "people with disabilities" and equivalent terms repeatedly in AB 1906, which guides the commission in its task of recommending a new term:

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- **“**The terms ‘dependent adult’ and ‘dependent person’ are misleading because many of the ***people with disabilities*** that those terms cover live independently. These terms can mislead law enforcement officers, social workers, and even crime victims and their families to think that many ***people with disabilities*** are excluded from the law’s protection.”

- **“**It is a priority of this state to ensure that the language used to draft California laws, including the drafting guidelines for legislation, appropriately recognizes and represents ***people with disabilities***.”

- “The commission shall, with input from stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the state protection and advocacy agency designated pursuant to Division 4.7 (commencing with Section 4900) of the Welfare and Institutions Code” – [i.e. ***Disability*** Rights California] – “complete and submit to the Legislature a study on how to remove the terms ‘dependent adult’ and ‘dependent person’ from California code sections, including, but not limited to, code sections that use the term ‘dependent’ in conjunction with the term ‘elder’ to describe the physical or financial abuse of persons who are elders or ***persons with a disability***, including, but not limited to, the Penal Code, Welfare and Institutions Code, and Civil Code.”

AB 1906 as introduced used the term “***persons/adults with disabilities***” as the one the Legislature intended the code sections to use. The bill’s sponsor, The Arc & UCP California Collaboration, asked the author to amend the bill to remove that provision and, instead, direct the commission in consultation with stakeholders to recommend a term. The purpose of our amendment was to avoid a fight in the Legislature in 2024 between those who favor people-first language and those who favor identity-first language, and rather to refer that question to the working group and commission. The intent of our amendment, which the Legislature adopted, certainly was not to reject our original term “adults/persons with disabilities,” which I know was one of your concerns. (We were happy to note that it appears all the working group members prefer people-first language.)

Thanks again for your great work on what turned out to be a much bigger and more difficult project than anyone anticipated.

Sincerely,

Greg deGiere
Civil Rights Advocate
The Arc of California