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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

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Disability Rights California issued the following statement with regard to the violence in Charlottesville

We Stand Against Hate

(Sacramento, CA – August 17, 2017) The events in Charlottesville last weekend remind us how important it is to unite against hate. One of our nation's greatest strengths is recognizing each individual's contributions no matter their disability, race, religion or sexual orientation. We condemn the racism and violence perpetuated by individuals identified with white nationalists and Nazis.

We are keenly aware that people with disabilities often are the first targets of persecution and discrimination. In 1933, one of the first laws passed by the Nazis called for sterilizing all people with disabilities including mental illness, learning and physical disabilities, blindness, deafness and epilepsy. The Nazis regularly labeled people with disabilities as "life unworthy of life." In 1939, the persecution escalated even further with a medical program of "mercy death" which resulted in the killing of 70,000 individuals with disabilities.

Disability Rights California was founded on the principles of equality, dignity, independence and freedom of people with disabilities. For nearly 40 years, we've fought against discrimination. Knowing what has happened to our community, we will stand up and speak out against bigoted discrimination against any individual or community and work towards a just nation that values each individual. We will keep fighting for including individuals with disabilities into communities of their choice. We will fight against involuntarily committing them to jails, prisons and institutions that disproportionately affect black and brown individuals. We will work to eliminate disparities in services for people with disabilities from racial communities; fight to secure access to affordable and accessible housing; and work to preserve health care for the millions of people who gained access to it when the Affordable Care Act was passed.

The events in Charlottesville do not reflect who we are as a people or as a country. DRC will continue to work with other advocates to protect basic human rights for all—the rights our country were truly founded on. Join us in uniting against hate.

Disability Rights California is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Check out our website (www.disabilityrightsca.org), Facebook and twitter @DisabilityCA.