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### CERL Systems' Closed Disability Sessions

**Question:** For those of you whose systems go into closed session for disability matters, do you allow a support person such as a spouse, domestic partner, relative, or friend in closed session?

System	Closed Session	Support Person
LACERA	Yes	LACERA does not allow a support person, relative, or friend in the hearing room during closed session
SBCERS	Yes	SBCERS does allow a support person to be present, but that person cannot speak unless he or she is the lawyer representing the applicant. Added the following to their rules, "An interested party may not pre represented by a relative, friend or other non-attorney. The Board or a referee has discretion to allow such a person to be present at a Board meeting or hearing solely to assist or support a member in self-representation."
OCERS	Yes	OCERS allows a support person but does not allow them to speak unless the member agrees to hold the matter in open session. However, in unique circumstances, OCERS has allowed the support person to speak.
SJCERA	Yes	SJCERA policy is silent on this issue, but they do have a provision that allows the Chair to permit questioning by Board members and others as will serve the purpose of the hearing.
SCERA	Yes	Applicants generally do not show up to SCERA Disability Committee or Board meetings. They would weigh the facts and circumstances around why the support person is necessary for the proceedings.
SCERS	Yes	SCERS rules do not address whether a support person may be present in closed session. Rules do appear to say only a party or the party's attorney may address the Board.
SamCERA	Yes	SamCERA only allows attorneys into closed sessions. Otherwise it becomes a quasi-public session. They give the member the option of going into a public session if they want to have a support person with them.
TCERA	Yes	TCERA does not allow either party into closed session. Any comments by the parties must be

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		made in public before the Board goes into closed session.
VCERA	No	VCERA believes the general rule is that only those with an official role or are essential to the meeting should be in closed session, but they would look at the facts and circumstances to determine whether there is compelling reason to have a support person.