



California Association for the Retarded

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March 14, 2005

The Honorable Denise Moreno Ducheny, Chairperson
Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Item 5180 - Department of Social Services – In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
March 17, 2005 - Hearing of Senate Budget Subcommittee #3

Dear Senator Ducheny:

On behalf of the California Association for the Retarded, I am writing to oppose the Governor's budget proposal to permanently reduce the State's share of cost for wages of IHSS workers to the minimum wage level of \$6.75 per hour. CAR is a nonprofit statewide organization with 10 local units that include family advocacy organizations, operators of day programs, and parent groups at state developmental centers.

The task of caring for people with mild to severe disabilities is a difficult and demanding one. If the Legislature approves this proposal, it is likely many competent workers will leave for better paying jobs, and there will be constant staff turnover. Realistically, who will we get to perform these tasks for such little money? The likely result of this proposal is a significant deterioration of services for the most frail and vulnerable of our population.

In addition, a significant portion of IHSS workers are family members, many of whom have given up jobs to stay at home to care for their loved one. This proposal would leave many of these people with no choice but to seek outside employment to support their families. The result is that disabled family members would be left to adjust to new IHSS workers or would be forced to move out of their homes to residential facilities or, in some cases, to nursing homes. This would be cruel, unconscionable, and costly.

It is patently unfair for the state to pay billions of dollars to provide generous wages, benefits and retirement arrangements for many groups of public employees, while it is asking this sector of "other public employees" to try to survive on minimum wage, with limited benefits, health care or retirement.

Please show your care and concern for those who cannot help themselves. We ask that you **REJECT** the Governor's proposal to reduce state funding for IHSS workers and that you **AUGMENT ITEM 5180** by \$195 million. I would appreciate your keeping me informed of your action on Item 5180.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman, President

cc: Senators George Runner and Tom Torlakson