



## California Association for the Retarded

2000 "O" Street, Suite #250, Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: (916) 498-1635 - Fax: (916) 498-1385

[www.carforchoice.org](http://www.carforchoice.org)

July 1, 2005

The Honorable Don Perata, President pro Tempore of the Senate  
The Honorable Fabian Nunez, Speaker of the Assembly  
The Honorable Dick Ackerman, Senate Republican Leader  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Assembly Republican Leader  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Item 5180** - Department of Social Services – In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

**Item 4300** – Department of Developmental Services (DDS) – Regional Centers

Dear Senator Perata, Assemblymember Nunez, Senator Ackerman, and Assemblymember McCarthy:

On behalf of the California Association for the Retarded, I am writing to urge you 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 (Item 5180). I am also asking you to eliminate existing rate and cost freezes for regional center services and restore additional proposed service reductions (Item 4300). 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.

### ◆ **In-Home Supportive Services Reductions (Item 5180)**

Please do not give in to pressure from the Governor to make these egregious cuts that would be so hurtful to so many people. The task of caring for people with mild to severe disabilities is a difficult and demanding one. If the Legislature approves the IHSS proposal, it is likely many competent workers will leave for better paying jobs, resulting in a shortage of IHSS workers. Realistically, who will we get to perform these tasks for such little money? The likely result 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 forced to move out of their homes to residential facilities or, in some cases, to nursing homes. This would be cruel and costly.

◆ **Regional Center Reductions** (Item 4300)

I urge you to augment Item 4300 (Department of Developmental Services) by \$94.7 million (\$83.5 million General Fund) to reverse the deterioration of program quality and availability of regional center community programs and protect the health and safety of people with developmental disabilities who live in the community. It is patently unfair for the state to pay billions of dollars to provide generous wages, benefits and retirement arrangements for many groups of state and local 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.

It is very short sighted that at the same time the Administration proposes significant amounts of money to create new community structures for clients currently residing at Agnews Developmental Center, it also is allowing existing community programs to deteriorate a result of ongoing funding freezes and the absence of periodic rate increases since 1998. In addition, the Governor is using the regional center system as a way to generate federal funds but is making no effort to ensure that those funds are used for the purposes for which they were generated. To reverse this deterioration it is necessary to:

- lift rate freezes in place since 2003,
- lift the suspension on the start up of new community programs,
- restore funds to offset a 5 percent reduction sustained by work activity programs,
- restore funds and staffing standards for supported employment programs, and
- reject remaining harmful cost containment actions including implementation of existing and new unallocated reductions for regional center operations and services,

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. We further ask that you **REJECT** the Governor’s proposal to reduce and/or freeze regional center funding and that you **AUGMENT ITEM 4300** by \$83.5 million (General Fund). I would appreciate your keeping me informed of your action on these two items.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman  
President

cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Director of Developmental Services