



California Association for the Retarded

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March 25, 2005

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

On behalf of the California Association for the Retarded, I am asking that you withdraw your budget proposal to 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.

We appreciated your decision during last year's budget session to withdraw your proposal to delete funding for the state-only portion of the IHSS program known as the "Residual program." We also appreciated your effort to seek and obtain a five-year federal waiver to provide Medicaid funds to this program. Your new budget proposal, however, would be a disastrous step backward. The task of caring for people with mild to severe disabilities is a difficult and demanding one. If your proposal is implemented, 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 home care 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. Your 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. Please imagine how it would feel for disabled individuals to have to leave the family home where they have lived their entire lives. The effects would be devastating, and we fear this will happen in many cases.

It is patently unfair for the state to agree 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.

You have said when you make a mistake, you have to go back and correct yourself. You also have stated that you are a governor who represents the people. Please remember that clients with mental retardation are people too. The hearing of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #3 On March 17 brought heart-wrenching testimony from many individuals and family members whose very lives depend on this funding. Please show your care and concern for those who cannot help themselves by withdrawing your proposal to reduce state funding for IHSS workers.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman,
President