



California Association for the Retarded

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February 11, 2009

Honorable Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
First Floor State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Assembly Speaker Karen Bass
Capitol Building, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Republican Leader Mike Villines
Capitol Building, Room 3104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Pro Tem Senator Darrell Steinberg
Capitol Building, Room 2014
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Republican Leader Dave Cogdill
Capitol Building, Room 2014
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: State Budget – Human Services

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger and Legislative Leadership:

As the state's leaders seeking resolution to the unprecedented fiscal crisis facing California, you know well the extreme financial pressures squeezing taxpayers, service providers and service recipients. We urge you to seek alternatives that will prevent further harm to vulnerable populations.

With a proposed 3% reduction totaling \$100 million annually, the developmental services system – after years of rate freezes and cost containment measures – is already in dire straits. Further cuts (potentially up to \$500 million – or 15% of the budget year allocation) cannot be absorbed and will so erode the system as to make it a travesty, and would require changes in statute and regulation that would introduce unheralded service reductions. Further, any hard budget cap on top of proposed cuts would permanently cripple the system. This undoubtedly would lead to system failure stories of horrific dimensions.

Your work to resolve the fiscal crisis is vital. We urge you avoid solutions that harm people or abandon promises made forty years ago and endorsed daily in the services that people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities rely on to stay alive and become fully contributing members of the community.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman
President