



California Association for the Retarded

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June 3, 2009

The Honorable Noreen Evans, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
Budget Conference Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Denise Ducheny
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Chair
Budget Conference Committee, Vice-Chair
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Evans and Senator Ducheny:

CAR is a state-wide organization advocating for choice on behalf of persons with mental retardation. We understand the depth of the current budget and cash flow crises afflicting California, and we commend the hard work you and your staff are doing to manage solutions to these woes.

We also know you understand the consequences of the cuts offered by the administration and that you are considering: the loss of matching revenue; the burden on poor, elderly and disabled populations of multiple cuts to their safety net services; the deleterious effects of cuts and closures on local economies and tax bases; and the very real possibility of tragic health consequences. Along with you we have listened to hundreds of private citizens offer testimony at your recent hearings, and to some who refuse to believe this is only about spending and not also about revenue.

Specifically, the cuts proposed to the developmental services system on top of years of cuts and freezes – when coupled with cuts to Medi-Cal, In-Home Supportive Services, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment (SSI/SSP) benefits, and so many other protective programs – threaten the very survival of some of the most vulnerable people in the state.

As concerned citizens, voters, taxpayers, parents/families of persons with mental retardation, and state service consumers, we implore you to do as little harm as possible in these perilous times to those least able to protect themselves. Your courage and wisdom may well be all that stands between Californians and, for many, fiscal and physical devastation. Preserve safety net services, keep the promise of the Lanterman Act, and be the leaders we now so desperately need.

Again, we very much appreciate the diligence you have displayed in receiving public testimony on difficult issues and the hard work you have before you sorting out responses to the crises at hand.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman
President

cc: Joint Budget Conference Committee Members