

GABRIELLE KITCHENER

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February 18, 2009

To the The Members of the Appropriation Committee:

My name is Gabrielle Kitchener. I have both physical and psychiatric disabilities. I come before you today in support of generous funding for the Department of Social Services, despite the current financial crisis. In the long run, generous funding for DSS will save money elsewhere.

DSS administers a program called Medicaid. Medicaid covers home health care for me. My home health aides are a lifeline for me. They assist me with such activities of daily living as bathing, dressing, eating and toileting. They also assist me with my daily exercises, which are prescribed by a home care physical therapist. Without my home health aides, I would be in a nursing home which is much more costly and restrictive.

In addition, DSS funds BRS, which in turn funds the centers for independent living. These centers assist people with disabilities from all over the state in obtaining and maintaining independent lives. They provide such services as peer mentoring, independent living skills training, information and referral, and advocacy. It is essential to preserve funding of these centers.

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