

March 5, 2015

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you today to implore you to reconsider the budget cuts for the Department of Developmental Services. I have worked with this population for over 10 years and I have seen firsthand the lives that these folks live and how much the budget cut would devastate them. I have seen many individuals turn their lives around and become successful because of the fantastic support that they receive. They need the money from the budget in order to keep those supports in place. I would hate to see someone I support not be able to receive support because of a budget cut. Our agency works hard to provide support for a variety of people and also try to maximize their budget so we they can lead the amazing lives that they deserve.

I am writing today not only on behalf of those that I support but for myself and my coworkers as well. I have loved my work for a long time and I work with a great group of people who are invested in the lives of those we support that being said, however, I have seen fantastic supporters leave because of money. These cuts would cause more great people to either be laid off or leave because we have not seen a raise in quite some time, instead we get cuts causing the agencies and organizations to stretch already tight budget to accommodate the loss of revenue. I am currently going to school to put myself in a better position to get the things I want in life and unfortunately this requires me to leave the job that I love because it just doesn't pay enough. I would never leave if I made good money. The budget cuts make it impossible for many, including myself, to do the work we love. I have a question, if those who love to work with these individuals can't support them because they don't make enough money to support themselves and their families, who will? We know that the institutional setting doesn't work and isn't appropriate. Where will these individuals go if we continue to cut the money that funds them? Who will care for them? Are they expected to sit in chairs and draw all day because there aren't enough people to support them in a more rewarding environment or not work when they are very capable because we can't send someone with them to assist with the things that they may struggle with in a meaningful job where they can earn a fair wage? This to me is moving backwards.

I am greatly disappointed that when cuts come around that this group seems to be hit hard and often. I have written the governor to let him know my feelings about the cuts and I am reaching out to you to see if there is some other option to the cuts. I know that if we put our heads together that we can come up with a better plan. The lives of the individuals we love and support depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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