



IHSS Coalition

QUALITY CARE BEGINS AT HOME

January 14, 2009

The Honorable Sam Aanestad
State Capitol, Room 3063
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: IHSS: Take Our Dare – Show You Care

Dear Senator Aanestad;

The IHSS Coalition certainly recognizes the gravity of the budget situation and the immediacy of the cash-flow shortage. We appreciate the challenge you face to devise a budget that closes a multi-billion dollar gap and we recognize the difficulty ahead as the legislature and Administration work to forge a compromise approach. However, we do not believe that the health and welfare of seniors and people with disabilities, as well as the providers who provide essential home care services, should be compromised in order to balance the budget.

The Governor has proposed a total of \$651 million in cuts to IHSS when the reductions for the current fiscal year and the upcoming budget year are combined. The cuts to SSI/SSP grants are projected to be \$1.448 billion over the same time period; and the proposed suspension of the June 2010 COLA adds another \$323.9 million to the proposed SSI/SSP reductions. These cuts, if enacted, will have a staggering impact on seniors and people with disabilities.

IHSS is one of the most cost effective programs in state government. It provides needed support to approximately 428,000 aged, blind or disabled Californians who are unable to remain safely in their own homes without such assistance. IHSS saves the taxpayers millions of dollars each year because these Californians can stay in their own homes instead of being forced into far more costly institutions. Recently, conservative Sacramento Bee columnist Daniel Weintraub—who is certainly no fan of government programs or unions—spent some time with more than a dozen home care consumers. Here's what he wrote about his experience in a column in the Bee:

“I don't know what the best mix of cuts and taxes might be, if there is such a thing. All the choices seem bad. But after spending parts of two days last week with more than a dozen disabled people who depend on state aid to live on their own, outside of nursing homes, I know this: They are the last ones whose services and support should be cut.”

The IHSS Coalition believes that Governor Schwarzenegger and our legislators can also learn from this kind of experience. That's why we are challenging the Governor and all legislators to spend some time with your constituents who rely on home care services. The theme of this project is: Take Our Dare –Show You Care. A representative from the IHSS Coalition will be in contact with your office to schedule your participation.

Sincerely,

AARP-California

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)

California Association of Public Authorities for IHSS (CAPA)

Californians for Disability Rights, Inc. (CDR)

California Disability Community Action Network (CDCAN)

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC)

California In-Home Supportive Services Consumer Alliance (CICA)

California Senior Legislature

California United Homecare Workers (CUHW)

Congress of California Seniors

Gray Panthers California

Herbert M. Meyer, Consumer of IHSS Services, Marin County.

IHSS Public Authority of Marin County

Independent Living Services of Northern California

John Wilkins, IHSS Coalition Chair (Fresno IHSS Consumer)

Marin Center for Independent Living

National Senior Citizens Law Center (NSCLC)

Nevada Sierra Regional IHSS Public Authority

Northern California ADAPT

Older Women's League California (OWL)

Personal Assistance Services Council of Los Angeles County

Protection & Advocacy, Inc.

Quality Homecare Coalition

Resources for Independent Living

San Francisco IHSS Public Authority

Service Employees International Union – State Council:

SEIU United Long Term Care Workers

SEIU United Healthcare Workers West

SEIU Local 521

United Domestic Workers of America/AFSCME