

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF DOMESTIC POLICY

CAROL H. RASCO
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

To: _____

Draft response for POTUS
and forward to CHR by: _____

Draft response for CHR by: _____

Please reply directly to the writer
(copy to CHR) by: _____

Please advise by: _____

Let's discuss: _____

For your information: _____

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Remarks: _____

FYI

Did Jeremy
cc all our
app rep
staff?

A UNIFIED MESSAGE TO CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION...

Completed
Copies sent
to Roz.

9/25/95

DR

SFP 20 1995

FROM...
PEOPLE FIRST
OF ILLINOIS

COALITION OF CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

ARC OF ILLINOIS

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY
OF GREATER CHICAGO

IL PLANNING COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

THE ASSOCIATION OF
PERSONS WITH SEVERE
HANDICAPS IN ILLINOIS

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY
OF ILLINOIS

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CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER
HEALTH CARE

INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (UAP)

PARTNERS IN QUALITY

ADVOCATES UNITED

September 14, 1995

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

ATTENTION: Carol Rasco
Domestic Policy Council

Dear President Clinton:

This *Unified Message to Congress* is advanced by twenty (20) State organizations who represent over one million people with disabilities and families in the State of Illinois. Together these consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations have over 300 local chapters and affiliates throughout the State.

The organizations are sending a unified message to members of the Illinois Congressional delegation and the Administration regarding the impact of devastating cuts, the removal of federal safeguards, and the weakening of federal policy and civil rights laws for people with disabilities and their families.

Disability crosses all income, age, and ethnic groups. It is estimated that over 49 million Americans and Illinoisans have disabilities. All of these citizens can become participants and contributors in society if they receive the services, supports, and other assistance they require throughout their lives in order to achieve independence.

The actions under consideration by Congress will cause a major, long term reversal in the progressive national disability policy that has been achieved over the last twenty years. The national agenda has advanced progress in education, employment and training, housing, transportation, and civil rights for people with disabilities. Significant progress has been made in services and supports that enhance independence and participation in the mainstream of communities. This progress is largely the result of the federal government's leadership.

A balanced budget, tax breaks for America's wealthy, including corporations, must not be borne by a minority segment of America's population. All federal spending and revenue must be included in the deliberations to balance the budget.

Losses across programs will have an enormous multiplier effect on countless individuals and families who rely on a combination of federally assisted programs for their independence. Ultimately, cuts in programs contain hidden costs for federal, state, and local governments. The proposed cuts and elimination of programs and the intent to block grant programs to the states, as a means to reduce the federal budget deficit, only rearranges the costs from one level of government to another that is not prepared to replace that loss of revenue.

The supports needed by people with disabilities and families to remain together and to attain stability do not disappear with a loss of federal revenues for those supports. It will however, force people to turn to more costly government financed programs and services.

Block grants to the states as a cost savings mechanism and as a means of shifting the responsibility to the states are unacceptable to the disability community. Block granting various programs will remove the "entitlement" nature of those programs. This entitlement nature has been essential to ensure equal access to services for people with disabilities. In actual outcomes for people with disabilities and families, it means cuts in funding for the necessary supports to live independently and productively. Waiting lists will grow tremendously. It will mean a loss of the voice of the consumer for input into defining the services they need. People with disabilities and their families will lose the current protections they have under law and there will be less accountability to the public at-large for expenditures of public funds.

There needs to be a continued leadership role by the federal government in disability policy. The policy of the nation as established by Congress through various laws has clearly defined the priorities, resources and programs that promote individual choice and the valued outcomes of independence, productivity, integration and inclusion in society.

The accompanying document reports to members of the Illinois Congressional delegation and others, the impact upon an entire segment of society -- people with disabilities and their families-- and the economic/fiscal implications for Illinois and the Federal government as a result of these actions. **We strongly urge you to consider the "Message" we are conveying to you.** Disability should be a non-partisan issue.

Sincerely,

Illinois Advocacy Organizations
830 S. Spring Street
Springfield, IL 62704

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ABOUT THE ISTOOK AMENDMENT

MESSAGE:

OPPOSE THE "ISTOOK/MCINTOSH" AMENDMENT.

DO NOT DENY PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE OF THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR.

DO NOT DENY PEOPLE ACCESS TO INFORMATION THAT THEY CANNOT GET ELSEWHERE AND WHICH IS NEEDED TO EFFICIENTLY USE SERVICES.

RATIONALE: Federal and state laws are already in place prohibiting political advocacy. No evidence has been put forth to substantiate that there is prevailing grant abuse by the nonprofit sector. This amendment violates freedom of speech. It is an attempt to silence the advocacy voices of the disability community who are not typically approached by policymakers for their opinions and input. It would eliminate the check and balance system currently in existence.

It furthers inequity because it applies **only** to not-for-profit organizations who are already governed by existing federal and state laws. It does not apply to the for-profit business sector and organizations like the tobacco industry or defense contractors who receive huge sums of federal money and are also political contributors. It will be costly to regulate in time and federal resources.

Information dissemination among groups and organization would be prohibited. Thousands of Illinois citizens would not have up-to-date State and federal information about the services, supports and other assistance that they or their children receive on a daily basis. Existing partnerships and the development of new partnerships between people, families, local agencies, and policymakers would be halted.

The significant progress over the last twenty years in disability policy has largely been the result of advocacy by not-for-profit groups. The Istook amendment will halt the positive momentum that has been underway, resulting in a backward movement after years of slow progress.

Advocacy by not-for-profits was the catalyst for the passage of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (formerly, P.L. 94-142 (Education of Handicapped Children), the Americans With Disabilities Act, the shift from costly government financed institutional services to community based services, the broadening of housing opportunities for people with disabilities, and other progressive initiatives.

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ABOUT THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

MESSAGE:

OPPOSE EFFORTS THAT SEEK TO EXCLUDE OR MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TO ATTEND REGULAR CLASSROOMS, INCLUDING THOSE BASED ON UNFOUNDED ARGUMENTS THAT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOLS.

OPPOSE ALL EFFORTS THAT ATTEMPT TO WEAKEN THE "LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT" (LRE), THE "FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION" (FAPE), AND THE "DUE PROCESS" PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.

OPPOSE EFFORTS THAT ATTEMPT TO MAKE IDEA SUBJECT TO ANY REGULATORY REFORM MEASURES.

SUPPORT RE-FOCUSING THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROVISIONS UNDER IDEA TO ASSURE THAT STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES BEGIN TO TRAIN OUR FUTURE TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE.

SUPPORT A REASSESSMENT OF THE CASE STUDY EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN TO BE MORE EDUCATIONALLY RELEVANT. INFORMATION THAT IS CURRENTLY GATHERED LIKE SOCIAL, MEDICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEWS SHOULD BE DRAMATICALLY STREAMLINED IN FAVOR OF CURRICULUM BASED ASSESSMENTS WHICH YIELD INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THE STUDENT'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

REAFFIRM AND ENHANCE THE FEDERAL ROLE IN ASSURING THAT THE IDEA IS IMPLEMENTED.

DISCOURAGE THE USE OF LABELS BY FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE SET BY SOME STATES WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING FEDERAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

"EARMARK" THE MAJORITY OF BASIC STATE GRANT FUNDS TO ASSURE FEDERAL FUNDS ARE FLOWED TO THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY RATHER THAN INTERMEDIATE DISTRICTS AND COOPERATIVES.

REQUIRE STATES TO ASSURE THAT STATE FUNDING FORMULAS ARE PLACEMENT NEUTRAL SO AS NOT TO "FORCE" THE SEGREGATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

ENSURE THE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN OTHER NATIONAL INITIATIVES TO ASSURE THAT STUDENTS WITH IEPs, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SEVERE DISABILITIES, BENEFIT FROM THOSE INITIATIVES.

RATIONALE: The rights for children and parents found in IDEA are well grounded in the U.S. Constitution. If the basic tenets and foundation of IDEA, the least restrictive environment; free and appropriate public education, and due process are not protected, Illinois and the nation will return to the pre-1970s where over half of the nation's children did not receive an education.

As the reauthorization process progresses the endeavor must be viewed as an opportunity to review a good law and improve and strengthen it based on 20 years of experience and implementation. The IDEA ensures that students with disabilities in need of special education and related services are entitled to an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

Some professional groups and unions are attempting to weaken the right of children with disabilities to attend their home schools and classes. Some of these proposals are "trial periods" during which teachers can decide that a student is "inappropriately placed", the removal of the right to attorney's fees for parents who go through the due process system, and allowing teachers to complain to the Office for Civil Rights. These same groups are using "discipline" as the reason to weaken children's rights. There is no research that shows that students with disabilities are the cause of violence in our nation's schools.

The services and supports provided under IDEA foster development of the skills necessary for children with disabilities to achieve the greatest degree of independence as adults. Students with disabilities who receive an appropriate education with students who do not have disabilities have a better chance of going on to post-secondary education or entering the workforce.

The federal government plays a particularly important role in assisting the states in meeting their constitutional obligation to ensure the education of children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. In addition to safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities and their parents, the federal government supports states' efforts through fiscal aid to the states and through development of the knowledge and practices necessary to ensure a free appropriate education under IDEA.

A UNIFIED MESSAGE TO CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION....

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PARTNERS IN QUALITY

ADVOCATES UNITED

ABOUT FUNDING THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

MESSAGE:

OPPOSE CUTS TO THE IDEA AND ITS DISCRETIONARY PROGRAMS.

RESTORE THE HOUSE BUDGET CUTS.

"EARMARK" THE MAJORITY OF BASIC STATE GRANT FUNDS TO ASSURE THAT FEDERAL FUNDS FLOW TO THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY RATHER THAN INTERMEDIATE DISTRICTS AND COOPERATIVES.

REQUIRE STATES TO ASSURE THAT STATE FUNDING FORMULAS ARE PLACEMENT NEUTRAL SO AS NOT TO "FORCE" THE SEGREGATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

DO NOT BLOCK GRANT IDEA BASIC AND DISCRETIONARY GRANTS.

RATIONALE: Budget cuts and the elimination of programs run contrary to the nation's policy and commitment to students with disabilities which have historically received bi-partisan support in Congress. The IDEA basic and discretionary grants are NECESSARY to retain significant gains that students with disabilities have achieved.

The cuts made by the House are incongruent with the nation's agenda for school reform. Thousands of Illinois children, families, teachers and others will not have access to or benefit from the research, technology development, information and technical assistance, and early childhood education, among other resources which are critical to the education of all children with disabilities. Projects which target minority students to improve their educational achievements will end.

Parent and family training and the partnerships being forged with schools will be lost under cuts and elimination in funding for these initiatives. Family and parent training and information has improved parental participation in education and offered a critical element to parent and school partnerships.

There will be a vast shortage of trained special education and regular education teachers and other personnel. Illinois teachers have identified teacher preparation as the most important issue surrounding the inclusion of students in education. Research, demonstrations, technical assistance and innovations in professional development have improved the educational outcomes for over a million Illinois children and must be continued. Without research projects that keep pace with medical and technological advances, schools will not be able to meet the needs of children with highly specialized needs.

Block granting will result in both a reduction of federal funds and the weakening of federal leadership and monitoring/compliance capabilities. History has taught us that both are vitally important for the advancement of education for children with disabilities.

Cuts to these programs will affect all children not just children with disabilities. School reform efforts will not achieve the goal of a unified system which respects and values diversity of children and young adults who represent many ethnic groups, races, languages, backgrounds and human capabilities.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL(S): The House passed the Labor, HHS and Education's appropriation bill which would cut special education training, research, and demonstration programs by 64% or \$162 million. **The following programs would be eliminated:**

- **Personnel Development** which provides funding for students preparing to be special education teachers.
- **Early Childhood Education** which provides support for direct demonstration, outreach and hands-on technical assistance to improve services and the outcomes for infants, toddlers and young children.
- **Technology** that has provided significant assistance directly to children so they can learn.
- **Clearinghouses** which provide information to the states, teachers, parents and others regarding the generic and specialized services that are available to very young children.
- **Regional Centers** which provide technical assistance to states.
- **Two hundred direct demonstration projects** that provide state-of-the-art information to better prepare teachers and others on the best practices in educating children with disabilities.
- **Projects** that provide information that improve the effectiveness of special education and early intervention services to young children.

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PARTNERS IN QUALITY

ADVOCATES UNITED

ABOUT MEDICAID

MESSAGE:

MAINTAIN THE ENTITLEMENT NATURE OF THE PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, WHO HAVE NO OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HEALTH AND LONG TERM CARE. DO NOT BLOCK GRANT THE PROGRAM TO THE STATES.

MAINTAIN FEDERAL OVERSIGHT AND CONTROL OF THE PROGRAM.

MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVEL OF FEDERAL FUNDING SUPPORT FOR MEDICAID.

EMPOWER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES TO MAKE CHOICES REGARDING ONGOING SUPPORT STRATEGIES, LIKE ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT STRATEGIES, CASH ASSISTANCE, VOUCHERS, OR CONTRACTS WHICH WOULD BE LINKED TO OUTCOMES DEFINED BY THE CONSUMERS.

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED IN INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER LARGE FACILITIES AND CONTINUE TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY SUPPORTS FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS, BY ENCOURAGING THE USE OF THE "HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED WAIVER" AND ELIMINATING INCENTIVES FOR STATES' RELIANCE ON INSTITUTIONS.

USE AVAILABLE DOLLARS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES TO MORE COSTLY INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

RATIONALE: Medicaid is a federally funded program which provides health insurance and a long-term care program for low income families AND people with disabilities, including children. It is not a welfare program. Medicaid is the single largest source of federal aid to the States. In Illinois and in many other states, Medicaid also pays for care at home (the home and community-based waiver program) to help people with disabilities avoid nursing homes and other institutional settings that are extremely costly and offer minimal quality.

One in four Illinois at-risk children receives health insurance through Medicaid coverage and 266,000 persons with disabilities received Medicaid benefits in 1993. Illinois ranks 8th among the states which will lose funds through proposed Medicaid cuts.

The public perception and assumptions regarding the Medicaid program are misleading. The realities of Medicaid in Illinois are:

- Most Medicaid dollars (two-thirds) are spent on people with disabilities and Americans who are aging.
- The major factors behind the growth of Medicaid spending in the last few years is higher reimbursement rates for providers and rising enrollment in the program, especially among people with disabilities.
- Medicaid has represented a growing part of the State's expenditures but it is misleading to claim that Medicaid has severely limited the State's ability to fund education.
- A managed care program is not likely to lead to large savings for the State.

Medicaid funds are used by the states to supplement state dollars to expand services and supports to the elderly and people with disabilities. Examples of services and supports that have been enhanced through the use of Medicaid dollars are assistive technology, home and community-based services for people with disabilities, various therapies, respite services, and other services in a person's home that allows them to continue to live at home.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL(S): There are various House and Senate proposals being debated in Congress. Current proposals would "block grant" the Medicaid program to the states. This would end the "entitlement" nature of the program and likely lead to an inequitable distribution of federal funds to the states, and place a "cap" on federal payments to the states.

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ABOUT REGULATORY REFORM

MESSAGE:

OPPOSE ANY ATTEMPT THAT WOULD COMPROMISE THE HARD-WON CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

OPPOSE ANY BILL THAT DOES NOT EXCLUDE ANY RULE OR AGENCY ACTION THAT ENFORCES THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. SUCH PROPOSALS WOULD COMPLETELY SIDETRACK THE PROTECTIONS AFFORDED TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

RATIONALE: It is imperative that civil rights laws be exempt from all regulatory reform efforts. The progressive federal disability policy that has been developed over the last twenty years will be devastated by any measures that seek to weaken the rights and protections afforded to people with disabilities and their families.

The Federal government has the authority and the responsibility to issue federal regulations to implement federal laws. Laws such as the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, Americans With Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act all have regulations that govern how the law is implemented, what rights are protected by the regulations, how people can make complaints under the laws, and how those complaints are resolved are a few of the issues covered by regulations for all laws.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL(S): There are numerous pieces of legislation in both the House and Senate that would completely revise the Federal government's regulatory authority. They include a stop on new regulations and a requirement that new regulations go through a complicated review process and cost-benefit analysis. Under these proposals if the implementation costs of the rules is more than the benefits for people with disabilities the regulation can be revised to meet that standard, or revoked. In some proposals a sunset date would be placed on all regulations.

8/95

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ABOUT THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

MESSAGE:

PRESERVE THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA).

OPPOSE ALL EFFORTS THAT JEOPARDIZE OR WEAKEN IN ANY WAY THE ADA AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IT REPRESENTS.

OPPOSE EFFORTS THAT ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE ADA SUBJECT TO ANY REGULATORY REFORM MEASURES.

OPPOSE EFFORTS THAT WOULD EXTEND THE TIMEFRAME FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO COMPLY WITH TITLE II OF THE ADA.

RATIONALE: ADA is a civil rights law that was necessary to protect the constitutional rights of people with disabilities. ADA provides a much needed method for accountability to ensuring that the policy of America toward its citizens with disabilities is equal to that offered, enjoyed, and often taken for granted by all other citizens. Disability is a natural component of the human condition that will impact any one of us and our families in the future.

Over the last two years there has been an increasing number of attacks upon the ADA in the public media. Widespread misinformation accuse the ADA of being burdensome, cost prohibitive and unwieldy; many call the ADA an unfunded mandate. A few anecdotal scare stories have been used via the media to sway Americans to move against the ADA.

However, a recent Harris poll clearly demonstrates that the ADA has wide American support. Among the findings --

- An overwhelming majority of senior corporate executives support the ADA and do not favor weakening it in any way.
- A very small fraction of employers reported additional costs or expensive litigation due to the ADA.

The percentage of companies that say accommodations have been made in the workplace has increased substantially - from 51% to 81%.

The percentage of corporate employers with policies and programs for hiring people with disabilities has increased -- from 46% to 56%.

A large majority of respondents (70%) think that the ADA should not be changed. Eight per cent think the law should be strengthened. By an 82% to 5% margin, companies report that the opportunities the ADA will provide are worth the costs of its implementation.

The poll confirms findings of earlier research that people with disabilities represent "underused potential"; 73% of employers see it that way. Moreover, 89% of employers say that their employees would support policies to increase the number of people with disabilities in their companies.

When questioned about the national impact of hiring people with disabilities, 79% believed that their employment would be a "boost to the nation." Only 2% said that it posed a "threat to take jobs" from people without disabilities.

Corporate managers' views on the job performance of employees with disabilities are generally very positive. Seventy-six per cent as "pretty good" or "excellent"(17%). Very few give these employees negative marks.

Approximately half of the respondents (48%) say their costs to accommodate people with disabilities have increased "a little" as a result of ADA, while a third (32%) reported "no change at all".

Only 27% of companies say that the average cost of employing a person with a disability is greater than employing a person without a disability. Among executives who could provide figures, the median cost per employee for accommodation was \$223.

As for the future, 75% of the managers say that they are likely to make greater efforts to hire people with disabilities in the next three years. Ninety-eight per cent say there will be at least the same, or more, opportunities for people with disabilities.

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ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PROGRAMS

MESSAGE:

RESTORE THE CUTS TO FY 95 LEVELS FOR THE DD PROGRAMS; \$ 30 MILLION RESTORATION TO THE BASIC GRANT PROGRAM FOR DD COUNCILS, \$9 MILLION FOR UAPs, AND \$ 5.7 MILLION FOR PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

RATIONALE: The cuts to these programs represent a contradiction of Congressional policy and findings regarding empowering people, and focusing on the outcomes of independence, productivity, integration and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. With a small investment of federal funds, these programs provide resources for new and innovative service projects for people with developmental disabilities and their families that are alternatives to costly institutions. **Cuts to these programs will ultimately show no real cost savings to government.**

Without restoration of funds to DD Programs, there will be no demonstration of new technologies and supports that prevent developmental disabilities or research and demonstration of new and more cost effective measures to provide supports to people.

Congress has supported this program's modest growth for more than two decades. The thousands of Illinois citizens with the most severe disabilities and their families need the voice and assistance provided by these programs. Budget shortfalls for DD Councils and UAPs will not be picked up by the states.

Examples of programs that have been demonstrated through the DD Programs include family support, supported employment, self-advocacy, home ownership for people with disabilities, standards for services to people with developmental disabilities that focus on outcomes for people not agencies. DD Programs provide needed diagnostic services, supports for individuals and families and assistive technology services that will be severely diminished with a loss of federal support.

Without the necessary restoration of funds, over one million Illinois citizens with disabilities and their family members will not have an independent voice to speak

on their behalf for their needs and desires. The current momentum for policy and systems change will cease. These programs have been the impetus for positive change in all states.

DD Programs have been successful in leveraging other State, Federal and local resources to fund services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Projects funded through these programs have targeted minority and traditionally underserved and unserved groups of people with disabilities and their families. They have supported and conducted training opportunities for thousands of people with developmental disabilities, family members, and the professionals who work with them.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL(S): The House passed Appropriations bill for Labor, HHS and Education's contains a 43% (\$ 30 million) reduction over FY 95 appropriated level for DD Councils; UAPs received a \$9 million reduction; and Projects of National Significance were eliminated.

A UNIFIED MESSAGE TO CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION....

FROM...
PEOPLE FIRST
OF ILLINOIS

COALITION OF CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

ARC OF ILLINOIS

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY
OF GREATER CHICAGO

IL PLANNING COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

THE ASSOCIATION OF
PERSONS WITH SEVERE
HANDICAPS IN ILLINOIS

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY
OF ILLINOIS

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

PEOPLE FOR INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES &
FAMILY SUPPORT
NETWORK

COALITION ON SCHOOL
INCLUSION

ACCESS LIVING

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
LATINOS WITH
DISABILITIES

FAMILY TIES NETWORK

IL NETWORK OF CENTERS
FOR INDEPENDENT
LIVING

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT
LIVING COUNCIL

ILLINOIS EASTER SEAL
SOCIETY

CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER
HEALTH CARE

INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (UAP)

PARTNERS IN QUALITY

ADVOCATES UNITED

ABOUT SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (CHILDREN'S SSI)

MESSAGE:

SUPPORT CONTINUATION OF CASH BENEFITS TO FAMILIES, RETAIN THE INDIVIDUALIZED FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION, AND DO NOT CHANGE TO A BLOCK GRANT SYSTEM.

SUPPORT AN EVALUATION OF THE EXISTING SSI PROGRAM WITHOUT TAKING COVERAGE AWAY FROM CHILDREN.

SUPPORT PROVISIONS TO REMOVE THE CURRENT DISINCENTIVES TO EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT REMOVING ESSENTIAL BENEFITS.

ENHANCE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY TO PURSUE COMPLIANCE ISSUES AND CASES OF FRAUD.

RATIONALE: SSI is a form of family support which assists families in keeping their children with disabilities at home, keeping their families together and costs much less than institutional settings. It allows choices for people. Thousands of Illinois families will be without the resources necessary to meet the costs of keeping their child at home without SSI assistance. With the end of the health care reform momentum last year, devastation of the SSI program will leave hundreds of thousands of children and families without necessary support services.

Children and families will lose the necessary cash to pay for such things as, prescription medication for the child, communication and assistive technology like hearing aids and other devices, physical therapies, specialized foods and diet supplements necessary for the child's health, etc.

Approximately \$869,000,000 in federal SSI payments to hundreds of thousands of Illinois children will be lost over the next five years under the legislation already passed by the House (Personal Responsibility Act (H.R.4)).

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL(S): In the House version (H.R. 4), children who were eligible one month prior to enactment of the new law would be eligible and those who would be at risk of institutionalization without the cash

benefits. Block grants would replace cash benefits and would allow states to decide which services would be provided to an unknown number of children. The block grants would be funded at 25% below the current level of funding. Children would also lose Medicaid coverage under the House version.

The Senate version (Family Sufficiency Act of 1995, a revised version of H.R. 4), reinstates the cash benefit for children and does not turn the funding into a block grant to the states. Like the House version, the *Zebly* ruling (Supreme Court), which granted benefits to children through Individual Functional Assessments (IFA) would be reversed. Over 200,000 children who would receive benefits under *Zebly* would lose.

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PARTNERS IN QUALITY

ADVOCATES UNITED

ABOUT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

MESSAGE:

MAINTAIN THE CURRENT PRINCIPLES AND PROTECTIONS FOUND IN THE REHABILITATION ACT BUT ADDRESS ISSUES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM IN THE REAUTHORIZATION.

OPPOSE ANY EFFORT THAT WOULD LIMIT CHOICE AND FLEXIBILITY AMONG THE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS OFFERED UNDER THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) PROGRAM.

MAINTAIN CURRENT FUNDING LEVELS.

ENSURE THAT SERVICES, SUPPORTS, ACCOMMODATIONS AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND FUNDS FOCUS ON MEETING THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SEVERE DISABILITIES.

ENSURE THAT PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOCUS ON INTEGRATED TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS AND ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN HOW THOSE SERVICES ARE OBTAINED.

RATIONALE: The vocational rehabilitation programs fund employment and training programs for adults with developmental disabilities to assist them in becoming gainfully employed. Services include supported employment, job placement, vocational evaluation, and others. Supported employment services for individuals with disabilities provide on-going support services with the goal of entering or retaining competitive employment.

Including vocational rehabilitation in the block granting of all federal employment related programs will result in less focus on people with disabilities and further increase the unemployment rate for people with disabilities. Illinois will lose \$446,000 in the State vocational rehabilitation program and the supported employment program in the budget currently going through Congress.

States need more guidance in defining and controlling the kinds of services, supports, and opportunities that people with disabilities are offered. Often, these are not compatible with opportunities that people need to become employed.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL(S): There are two versions in Congress. The House version, H.R. 1617 (McKeon), the Consolidated and Reformed Education, Employment, and Rehabilitation Systems Act (CAREERS) and the Senate's S. 143 (Kassenbaum), the Workforce Development Act of 1995.

Both bills consolidate, eliminate, or completely overhaul over 100 federal employment, education, vocational education, and other job training programs. By and large these programs and funds would be "block granted" to the states.

The Senate's version would keep State vocational rehabilitation program as a separate block grant.

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PARTNERS IN QUALITY

ADVOCATES UNITED

ABOUT HOUSING

MESSAGE:

OPPOSE THE CUTS TO MEDICAID AND SSI, AND THE CUTS TO PROGRAMS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

RETAIN THE RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES UNDER THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AMENDMENTS.

RETAIN HUD SPONSORED PROGRAMS THAT SUBSIDIZE DOWN PAYMENTS FOR HOME OWNERSHIP.

MAINTAIN PROTECTIONS AND FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING, INTEGRATED INTO COMMUNITIES.

RATIONALE: Cuts to Medicaid and SSI may well force many people with disabilities to live in costly institutional settings rather than their own homes. Research has proven that in addition to improving the overall quality of life, life in the community for an individual with a disability is more cost-effective than life in an institution. Housing and home ownership by people with disabilities is a cost effective option that is chosen by more and more people with disabilities.

The proposed raise in HUD-assisted rental payments of between \$168 to \$600 per year would remove the option of living in their own homes for many people with disabilities already on limited incomes, forcing them to stay or to return to institutional settings which are far more costly to the government.

Termination of the Fair Housing Amendments Initiatives program would eliminate safeguards that prevent discrimination against people with disabilities when they want to secure housing or seek to insure their homes with the property insurance industry.

Many people with disabilities have limited incomes and depend on assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's programs in order to be independent and live in their own homes.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL: The McKinney Act homeless assistance programs would be cut by 40% or \$44 million. Section 8 rental assistance programs would see a raise in rental payments by a minimum of

6.7% and impose a new minimum monthly rent of at least \$50 per unit.

A \$2.3 billion reduction in capital funds for public housing and a \$720 million reduction in operating funds for public housing.

The Fair Housing Amendments Initiatives program would be eliminated.

A UNIFIED MESSAGE TO CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION....

FROM...
PEOPLE FIRST
OF ILLINOIS

ABOUT TRANSPORTATION

COALITION OF CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

MESSAGE:

ARC OF ILLINOIS

RESTORE THE CUTS TO THE OPERATING BUDGET FOR FEDERAL MASS TRANSIT.

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY
OF GREATER CHICAGO

ENABLE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES TO FIND AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT BY MAKING AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE TO THEM.

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PRESERVE TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT'S (ADA) PARATRANSIT PROVISIONS BY NOT MAKING IT EASIER FOR TRANSIT PROVIDERS TO USE "UNDUE FINANCIAL BURDEN" AS A REASON FOR NOT MAKING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY
OF ILLINOIS

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING

ENABLE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO BECOME AND REMAIN A PART OF THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMY, THROUGH FACILITATING THEIR ABILITY TO TRAVEL WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, TRAINING, SHOPPING, AND RECREATION.

PEOPLE FOR INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES &
FAMILY SUPPORT
NETWORK

RATIONALE: People with disabilities consistently report that the lack of accessible public transportation is one of their most significant barriers to independence and productivity. A recent needs assessment conducted by the Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois reinforces this finding.

COALITION ON SCHOOL
INCLUSION

ACCESS LIVING

Budget cuts of 44% by the House will further worsen the transportation barriers for people with disabilities and allow public transit providers to violate Title II of the ADA by arguing that to make reasonable accommodation would be an "undue financial burden".

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
LATINOS WITH
DISABILITIES

The transportation provisions in Title II of the ADA has facilitated the ability to access the community and become tax generators. The budget passed by the House would devastate federal transit dollars that come to local transit providers, and would all but eliminate affordable, accessible transportation options for many people with disabilities. People with disabilities will remain or become prisoners in their own homes.

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CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSAL: The appropriations bill passed by the House reduces the operating budgets for recipients of federal mass transit dollars by 44%.

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ABOUT TELECOMMUNICATIONS

MESSAGE:

INCLUDE DISABILITY ACCESS SAFEGUARD LANGUAGE WHICH IS CURRENTLY IN THE SENATE VERSION OF "THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPETITION AND DEREGULATION ACT OF 1995" IN THE FINAL COMPROMISE BILL.

RATIONALE: This measure would require that disability access safeguards be applied across all manufacturers of telecommunications services. It would also require inoperability among interfaces as convergences of technologies are developed. In this case individuals with various types of disabilities will not be left out of access modes if designers fail to include universal design features. The Federal Communications Commission would also be required to work closely with the disability community in timely development, promulgation and enforcement of relevant standards.

People with hearing, speech, motor, vision and cognitive disabilities must have access to the information superhighway. People with disabilities need to be involved in the development of services which they need and use.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS: Recently, the House and Senate have passed versions of a telecommunications deregulation bill. In the coming weeks, a conference committee on telecommunications will reconcile the differences between the House and Senate bills. Critical disability access provisions are included in both bills.

Significantly lacking in the House version are disability access safeguards that enforce requirements across ALL providers of telecommunications services and equipment, although requirements for closed captioning and a study on video description are included.

The Senate bill includes disability access safeguards imposed on all manufacturers and providers of equipment and telecommunications services, if readily achievable, in addition to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirements for closed captioning and development of video description. Standards for telecommunications would be developed by the FCC with guidelines for standards for telecommunications equipment to be developed by the Access Board.

Information not found in this file can be found in Records Management. This especially includes information from 1993 and 1994.