

THEY DESERVE MORE

Dear Governor Pritzker,

We know the state has been dealing with an unprecedented amount of Executive Orders, and federal funding being frozen and then reversed, deportation issues and much more, including a strain on revenue related to FY26 budget demands.

So we will be quick and to the point.

Please include people with disabilities and their needs in the state budget. Your trusted leadership is needed now more than ever.

Illinois ranks 46th in the nation for investment in community-based services for those with IDD. We continue to be out of compliance with the Ligas Decree. More than 16,000 families are stuck on a waiting list for services. The state is trying to move people from state institutions into the community support system, but that system cannot take them without additional investment from the state. The Guidehouse Rate Study, commissioned by the state, recommends DSP wages should be at least 150% of minimum wage—yet current wages stand at just 137%, falling short of what's needed to stabilize the system. Despite significant resources in the last several years for which we are very grateful, we still have a ways to go.

We need an investment now, one that will ensure DSPs are paid a fair wage and that individuals with IDD receive the support and services they need and deserve.

We need a \$2 per hour wage increase to bring DSPs to the recommended rate. That's an \$80M direct investment from the state, counting on the federal match at the levels we have received before the recent uncertainty. This is not just a budgetary concern—it's a moral imperative.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We are counting on you to do what is right—for people with disabilities and their families and for those who provide support 24/7.

Sincerely,

They Deserve More Coalition