

#bFair 2DirectCare

Letter To Legislator Template

[Name of NYS Assembly Member/NYS Senator]
[Street Address]
[City], [State], [Zipcode]

Dear [NYS Assembly Member/NYS Senator],

My name is [Insert Name] and I am a [Insert Title – DSP, parent, advocate, etc], a member of the bFair2DirectCare Coalition, and your constituent. I am writing to urge you to include years three and four of the living wage funding which is approximately \$75 Million for direct support professionals (DSPs) in the NYS Budget. This funding will help ensure DSPs are compensated fairly for the crucial care and support they provide for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. Without this funding, provider agencies that deliver around 85% of the day-to-day services for 130,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities will no longer be able to compete with the higher wages of other industries.

We're in a staffing crisis and it's only getting worse. A survey conducted by the bFair2DirectCare Coalition for 2017 found the following:

- 14.4 percent – or one in seven – of all direct support staff jobs were vacant, an increase of 30 percent since 2016 and up 80 percent since 2014, when the vacancy rate was 8 percent;
- The staff turnover rate is 26.7 percent annually, an increase of eight percent since 2016 and up 42 percent since 2014, when the turnover rate was 19 percent;
- One in ten direct support professionals leave the job after less than six months;
- More than 10 million overtime hours were logged, an increase of eight percent since 2016 and up from 5.6 million hours, in 2014, an increase of 79 percent.

These shocking statistics are due to DSPs turning to jobs with higher wages in other industries such as retail and food service. If we continue to neglect this critical workforce, it will destabilize leaving individuals with disabilities and their families who depend on this system of care without the supports they need to thrive.

As a [Insert Title – DSP, Parent, Advocate, etc], I know firsthand the dire need for higher wages. [Insert why bFair2DirectCare and the ask is important to you].

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Including years three and four of the living wage funding for DSPs in the NYS Budget help ensure that our most vulnerable populations are being given the support that they need and deserve.

Thank you for your consideration. I sincerely hope that you lend your support to DSPs who work tirelessly to provide care and support for New York's most vulnerable population.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE BLOCK]