



IHSS Coalition

QUALITY CARE BEGINS AT HOME

January 5, 2010

An Open Letter to Democrats in the State Senate and Assembly:

We are relying on you this year, as we have in the past, to save the In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program, one of the most valuable, life-saving, cost-effective programs in our state. We are writing to you now because, sadly, we already know what Gov. Schwarzenegger will say about IHSS in his State of the State message tomorrow, and in his spending plan on Friday.

Ever since his first weeks in office, the Governor has targeted IHSS for cuts. Last year he proposed throwing more than 400,000 elderly, blind and disabled Californians--90 percent of all IHSS recipients--out of the program. Just last month he threatened to eliminate the program entirely.

You stood with us every year to preserve IHSS because you understand its importance to the more than 450,000 consumers and nearly 400,000 workers who are your constituents. You fought back last winter and spring against the governor's proposals. But in July, 20 Democratic State Senators and 45 Democratic Assembly Members voted to eliminate or drastically reduce services for more than 100,000 IHSS recipients. In addition, 10 Democratic Senators and 12 Democratic Assembly Members voted to endorse the Governor's extreme and mean-spirited "anti-fraud" campaign, which will cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, despite the absence of any proof that widespread fraud exists in the program.

The 1999 US Supreme Court *Olmstead* decision affirmed the responsibility of states to ensure that people with disabilities, including seniors and children receive care in the most integrated setting. Even this administration acknowledges that the IHSS program keeps people out of more costly and less desirable out-of-home placement in nursing homes or other institutions. Despite that, **unless you say no**, the future of IHSS will be determined by a Governor who does not support services to keep people with disabilities and seniors living in their own homes.

Unfortunately, we have had to rely on the courts instead of the legislature to stop these illegal, immoral, and penny-wise, pound-foolish cuts designed to weaken and destroy the IHSS program.

This year, we need **all of you** to do what you know is right – and what you've done before: Stand up for the California consumers of IHSS, their families and the workers who provide their much-needed care. We expect you to stand up to the Governor. We expect you to demand that this year's budget be **debated and decided** in a process which allows all members of the Legislature, as well as key stakeholders and policy experts, to **observe and participate**. We expect you to find more equitable funding solutions and policies. We expect you to make decisions on IHSS based on its merits

IHSS is a program with a proven track record of keeping Californians with disabilities and seniors in their own homes and saving taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in doing so.

It is time for you to be accountable. It is time for you to live up to your party's platform, which says: "All people with disabilities must be able to sustain quality of life in the least restrictive environment possible and in accessible community settings"; and which promises: "Increased, stable funding and expanded service hours for In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) clients."

Sincerely,

AARP-California
ACLU of Southern California
California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)
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
Disability Rights California
Gray Panthers California
IHSS Public Authority of Marin County
Independent Living Services of Northern California
Marin Center for Independent Living
National Senior Citizens Law Center
Nevada Sierra Regional IHSS Public Authority
Northern California ADAPT
Older Women's League California (OWL)
Personal Assistance Services Council of Los Angeles County
Quality Homecare Coalition
Resources for Independent Living
San Francisco IHSS Public Authority
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC)
UDW Homecare Providers Union/AFSCME