



April 2017

Assemblyman Gary S. Schaer  
1 Howe Avenue  
Passaic, NJ 07055

Dear Assemblyman Schaer,

Direct Support Professionals assist and support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and although they perform critical tasks that provide everything from basic care to community integration, the average starting salary for a DSP is only \$10.50 an hour. Because of this low wage, provider organizations and families who seek to hire DSPs to care for their loved ones, have a very hard time finding and retaining staff. If nothing is done to address this issue, the workforce shortage will continue and individuals with I/DD will not have the care they need or access to the services they rely on. To ensure that a fully-staffed service delivery system for people with I/DD in New Jersey is created and maintained, DSPs must be paid a living wage.

Please include a \$1.25 an hour increase in the FY18 Budget for Direct Support Professionals who support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community. This step must be taken so that services continue uninterrupted to those who need them most.

Thank you,

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*The Coalition for a DSP Living Wage*

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