

Good afternoon. My name is Erik Geizer.

I'm the CEO of The Arc New York, the largest provider of supports and services for people with disabilities in the state.

Every year, we come before this Legislature asking for the same thing:  
**an inflationary adjustment.**

Not to grow.

Not to innovate.

**Just to keep up.**

This year, we are requesting a **2.7 percent increase.**

That request is not ambitious.

It is not aspirational.

It is the **bare minimum** required to adjust for inflation.

The state made significant investment in IDD services in the last few years.

Rebasing injected more funding than we've seen in a decade.

We appreciate that commitment. Those investments pulled us from a frightening crisis of care.

But when you hear about large investments, it can sound like the system has been righted.

**It hasn't.**

Funding to support New Yorkers with disabilities still lags behind inflation since 2020 alone.

**Think about that.**

A loaf of bread that was \$5 in 2020 costs roughly \$6.25 today.

We're not asking for butter.

We have to beg **every year** to afford **the bread.**

Those same pressures hit our workforce.

We've finally been able to raise wages, but they're still inadequate.

Frontline staff continue to leave because they cannot afford to stay.

They can't afford housing or childcare.

They can't afford healthcare.

They can't afford **food**.

That's why we're urging support for the **CareForce Affordability Package**.

But ask yourselves:

**Why are we asking for priority placement in affordable housing communities for direct care staff?**

Because wages are so low that many of these skilled workers still qualify for affordable housing.

**How is that possible?**

We haven't truly stabilized the system.

We can't innovate.

We can't modernize.

We can't invest in quality.

We can't even make basic operational progress—like transitioning to electronic records.

It's **2026**.

Providers are burning state resources every year advocating for you to cover inflation.

People with disabilities trek hours to Albany to rally at your doorstep.

Not fighting for progress. Just fighting to maintain the status quo.

**We are tired.**

Adjusting provider rates for inflation **cannot be an annual fight**.

It should be a **given—Every. Single. Year.**

New York has a **3.5-billion-dollar** revenue surplus, and the most robust reserves in the nation.

And we're **pleading with you** to ensure direct care workers can meet their ***basic needs?***

We shouldn't even be having this conversation.

The state can afford these requests.

**You have a responsibility to meet them.**