



Illinois is Abandoning People with Disabilities

Support SB955 and HB2960 which will provide a long-overdue solution to the state's caregiver crisis by raising starting wages for direct support professionals to \$15 per hour. Go to theydeservemore.com and contact your legislators and the Governor, urging them to support these bills.

They deserve more... Illinoisans with developmental disabilities AND those who care for them.

Over the past several decades, **thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities** have moved from their family homes, foster homes or state institutions into group homes, where they have been able to achieve more productive and fulfilling lives. But they must **have support and assistance** for everything from eating, bathing and administering medication to job and life-skills training like money management, meal preparation and reading.

That support comes from **caregivers** – direct support professionals (DSPs) – **whose wages are below the federal poverty level**. Illinois state funding for wages stalled nine years ago at about **\$9 an hour** – among the worst in the country!

Could you support your family on that pay? Could you even support yourself?

Hundreds of these positions go unfilled every year, and DSPs are leaving their jobs in droves to take retail and fast food positions -- just to make ends meet. **Caring, compassionate people who want to do this important work simply cannot afford to.**

This leaves children and adults with disabilities and their families facing constant change and uncertainty, missing doctor's appointments, and unable to participate in quality-of-life activities like jobs, volunteer opportunities, learning and recreational activities...unable to be **full** members of the community.

And worse – it is dangerous, even life-threatening. **Agencies throughout the state are understaffed, which can lead to terrible, preventable tragedies** like choking and accidents when there are simply not enough eyes or hands-on staff.

**Previous bills have been stopped at the Governor's desk.
The situation is much too dire now to be ignored.**



**THEY DESERVE
MORE**

CAREGIVER CRISIS: BY THE NUMBERS

\$9.35

Hourly starting wage for a direct support professional in a community setting

\$13.38

Average hourly wage for a full-time employee at Wal-Mart

9

Years since Illinois increased Medicaid rates earmarked for the care of people with developmental disabilities

16%

Cumulative rate of inflation over the same nine year period

50%

DSP wage increase that will be covered by federal Medicaid matching

47th

Illinois' rank among states for spending commitment for people with disabilities

27,000

Children and adults with developmental disabilities who depend on services

40%

Rate at which some agencies are understaffed; a dangerous gap

Hundreds of Thousands

Parents, siblings, family members of children and adults with developmental disabilities who rely on DSPs to care for and support their loved ones