**{Date}**

**{Legislator’s Name}**

**{Legislator’s Address}**

**Subject: Address Iowa’s Direct Care Workforce Crisis**

**Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: *You can find contact information for your State Senator and Representative, including email and mailing addresses, by going to:*** [***www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find***](http://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find)

I am one of Iowa’s 30,000 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) providing support every day to Iowans with intellectual, developmental, and mental disabilities. You've probably seen me or someone like me, proudly working with these wonderful people and their families so they can all live in the community and have full and rewarding lives.

While my paycheck comes from a community not-for-profit agency, the money to pay me comes mostly from the state of Iowa. DSP's salaries used to be much better than working retail or fast food jobs. Now, I know far too many co-workers who left for clerical or retail sales jobs last year. They didn't want to give up our special profession. They just could not afford to stay. In fact, statewide the annual turnover rate is nearly 50 percent. As a result, most of the community providers are short-staffed and turning away people who need care.

Those workers who left were supporting families in our community, some working with children with autism; others supporting citizens with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or a serious brain injury. Imagine how you would feel if your family needed help, and it was no longer available in the community, but only in an institution.

I support the Iowa Association of Care Provider’s request for a 10% increase in reimbursement rates with a 75% pass-through for direct care employee wages. While my job is rewarding, it is also demanding and every week I see another direct care worker leave because our wages just aren’t keeping up with the rest of the market.

I ask you to support me, my co-workers, and the people and families I serve.

**Respectfully,**

**Insert name and contact information**