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April 1, 2022

The Honorable Joaquin Arambula
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
1021 O Street, Suite 6240
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for a \$1.624 million Ongoing Investment for the Restoration of County-Based IHSS Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards

Dear Assemblymember Arambula,

We are writing to respectfully request \$1.624 million ongoing to restore the original funding levels of county-based In-Home Support Services (IHSS) Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards. These funds would be administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and divided equally among California's 58 counties to enable these Advisory Committees and Governing Boards to provide much-needed oversight and recommendations on the delivery of IHSS to the over 600,000 seniors and people with disabilities they serve.

The IHSS Public Authority was established to address the challenges individuals were facing in simply finding providers and reports of horrendous conditions in the delivery of IHSS where consumers were "unsafe in their own homes" according to a 1991 Little Hoover Commission report. In response, the Legislature required counties to establish an IHSS Public Authority to include a Consumer Advisory Committee or Governing Board. Legislative mandates also set the Public Authority as the employer of record for IHSS providers, established a registry for consumers and providers to find each other, and provided information on training for consumers and providers.

Fundamental to the original public authority legislation was the consumer role in the oversight of the delivery of IHSS. Consumer Advisory Committees or Governing Board were required to be made up of at least 51% current or past personal assistance users and include advocates, as well as other organizations serving people who utilize IHSS. These committees were charged with giving input and recommendations to any entity that had influence or authority over IHSS at the county, state, or federal level.

Unfortunately, during the budget crisis in 2011, the requirement for counties to maintain these committees became optional and funding was drastically reduced from \$56,000 to \$6,000 a year

per county. This funding was never restored and since then, consumer input on IHSS policies and practices has been severely limited.

Currently, only 32 of the 58 counties have public web-accessible information about their Advisory Committee or Governing Board. This means consumers have no information on when these Committees or Boards meet, how a consumer can apply to serve on the Committee or Governing Board, and most importantly, no information on how a consumer can give input on their IHSS services. Furthermore, for those counties that even have information for their Advisory Committees and Governing Boards, much of the content, including rosters, meeting agendas, and minutes, tend to be out-of-date thus undermining the fundamental role of the Public Authority.

This lack of accessibility to vital information and opportunities for IHSS recipients to provide input comes at a particularly critical time amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately impacted these same vulnerable populations. The urgency of this issue is further exacerbated by the current IHSS provider shortage crisis in which thousands of seniors and people with disabilities who have been approved for IHSS cannot find a provider.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your support for \$1.624 million ongoing to return the original funding levels for county-based IHSS Public Authority Consumer Advisory Committees and Governing Boards. The Legislature has previously recognized the need for this public accountability of IHSS and it is time we restore that commitment to the health and safety of our elderly and people with disabilities populations. Should you or your staff have additional questions, please feel free to contact Erika Ngo, Erika.Ngo@asm.ca.gov, in my office.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember Ash Kalra
27th Assembly District



Assemblymember Evan Low
28th Assembly District



Assemblymember Blanca Rubio
48th Assembly District