

*Writing a letter to your congressman is something everyone can do. Feel free to use the following sample letters as a guide, or to copy and paste them into your word processor and edit them however you choose. Please remember, however, that congressmen respond better to original letters than to form letters; the best letter is one that states your individual circumstances and opinions in clear, direct language.*

(A) Dear (Representative or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_,

I work as a Habilitation Training Specialist providing support for a person with developmental disabilities. I am a caring, patient, reliable person who bends over backwards to meet the needs of my client. Every day, my duties include providing nourishing meals and a clean, safe, and nurturing home life, patiently teaching basic life skills, assisting with personal hygiene activities, handling behavioral and emotional problems, administering medications, and precise documentation of all health and psychological issues. For these, and other duties, I am paid very low wages, on which I am trying to support a family. I understand you are considering cutting funding to programs for people with developmental disabilities and those of us who work for them. I hope this is not true. I hope you will support any and all appropriations for people with developmental disabilities. Thank you for your support.

(B) Dear (Representative or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_,

I work hard as a Job Coach for people with developmental disabilities. As challenging as it is for all of us to find, learn, and succeed in a new job, people who have mental retardation or developmental disabilities have an even greater challenge. While on the job with a client, I administer medication, patiently teach important job skills, help my client handle his behavioral or emotional issues so that he can work effectively, and help him develop a healthy work ethic. My work improves my client's quality of life, increases the productivity of his workplace, and helps him to be an asset in his community. For all of my hard work and skill, I am frequently paid less than the client with whom I am working. I have often considered that I would be better off financially working in fast food. I love my job and believe it makes a real difference, not just to my individual client, but also in the community as a whole. Please support appropriations for programs that

serve people who have developmental disabilities, so that I can afford to stay in this job that helps so many people. Thank you for your support.

(C) Dear (Representative or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a voter who has developmental disabilities. I live and work in Tulsa, where I am an active, enthusiastic member of my community. Programs funded through DDS give me the support I need to lead a safe, healthy life. Most importantly, these programs provide me with staff who help me with personal care and home care chores I cannot do alone, and provide the transportation I need to be an active citizen of Tulsa. My HTS staff are important to my quality of life, and hiring good staff who will stay in this job is really hard with such low pay. That's why I am writing to ask that you support any and all appropriations for people with developmental disabilities. This funding helps me get the support I need, and helps my HTS staff be able to stay in this job. Thank you for your support.

(D) Dear (Representative or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_,

My child has developmental disabilities. I am writing to let you know that the services and funding provided by the State of Oklahoma for my child are very, very important to her well being and to my family. Pay rates for HTS staff directly and dramatically affect my child's quality of life, because they directly affect the quality of applicant attracted to the job, as well as staff turnover. The current rate of turnover is very hard on my family as we are constantly training a new person to give my child the specialized care she needs, and are always worried that her inexperienced staff might forget a crucial detail in her care. Moreover, the turnover affects my child, who bonds with every caregiver, and suffers a loss each time her staff leaves for a higher paying job. Staff turnover is why I am writing to ask that you support programs for people with developmental disabilities funded through DDS. This funding is crucial so that we can give my child's staff the pay rate she deserves, and keep quality staff in our home long term. Thank you for your continued support of funding for DDS contracted services.