

To Whom It May Concern:

I work at a support service brokerage for people with developmental disabilities. I also have a cousin who has autism. My cousin has a case manager through a support services brokerage who connects him with small businesses that help him live on his own. He lives in his own apartment, has a job he loves, and participates in activities like bowling and budo. This is possible because of the providers that brokerage services pay for. If they were not there, my cousin would in all likelihood be living with his mother, would not have a job, and would not participate in life as much as he does, leaving him with fewer friends and less to do with his time. At 26, this would put him way behind his peers. As it is, he has a fulfilling life that I envy him for!

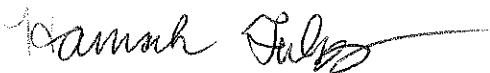
Why does this matter? Because of the supports he receives through brokerage services, he is able to work a steady schedule, which allows him to pay taxes and contribute to his community. It also gives him confidence and spending money, which I know he uses on video games and bowling, a couple of things he enjoys. It **keeps him from needing more expensive services**, such as living in subsidized housing or going to a day program, or perhaps therapy to combat depression brought on by lack of human connection.

It's not just him that benefits from this arrangement. The contractors he hires to help him live on his own and work benefit from the income. These are **small businesses that put their income back into our economy**. And their money comes directly from helping some of our more vulnerable citizens, many of them with more disabilities than my cousin.

My job at a support service brokerage has shown me that my cousin's story is not an anomaly, it is an example. There are thousands of people in support services across the state, many with much higher needs, and they are able to live as independently as possible because of the work we do. I have also seen the deep cuts we have sustained over the past few years, and while we are still functional, we are at the breaking point. Any further cuts will impact our ability to help adults with disabilities, and they will end up needing more expensive emergency care at the worst, or at best they will not be able to contribute taxes and their time to our state and their communities. This is not a trivial matter. **Support services present a win-win-win situation:** adults with disabilities get an improved quality of life; their families devote less time to caring for them; and the state saves money on their care and receives income tax from their work.

Thank you for your time and all you do for our state.

Cordially,



Hannah Fulop

I am a constituent of:

Sen. Ginny Burdick

Rep. Jennifer Ann Williamson