



**Action Alert:
Get Ready to Rally!
as we continue the
"Fight for our Lives"
Monday, March 18 3pm**

Friday Action: Call AND Email House Members ASAP

Dear Arc Family,

Last week, the Senate Finance Committee voted on [Senate Bill 280, the "Fight for \\$15" Bill](#), agreeing unanimously to amendments that increase the rates for DD Community Services in the bill from the insufficient levels of funding that were previously adopted by [House Bill 166](#).

The Senate amendments included the following percentage increases for DD Community Services for each of the years of the Minimum Wage phase-in:

- FY21 5%
- FY22 5%
- FY23 4.5%
- FY24 4%
- FY25 4%
- FY26 3%

Although this was a bit different than what we advocated for, we know this was a major victory that **would not have happened** without our incredible grassroots advocacy and the tireless work of our fellow coalition partners and key members of leadership in the Senate. The bill then went to the full Senate for review and a vote.

This evening, the Senate passed the Fight for \$15 bill out of the chamber with the amendments made by the Senate Finance Committee. While we are VERY pleased with the actions of our Senators, we have heard some rumblings that make us **very concerned** about what may next happen as the bill moves back to the House.

There is concern over what the implementation of this bill is going to cost. Since the general assembly needs to balance a current budget deficit and state revenue projections show levels lower than previously expected, legislators are feeling pressure to be conservative with spending.

While it is true that the DD increases will add money to the cost of implementing the Fight for \$15 bill when it becomes law, we also know the cost to provide these increases to DD Community Services providers match actual costs providers will have to implement Fight for \$15. **Just as the state needs to calculate what it is going to need to pay state workers for wages and benefits, the SAME consideration needs to be given to those entities who do the work of the state such as DD Community Services Providers. One is no less worthy of proper consideration and appropriation than the other.**

We need a full-court press from all advocates starting NOW!

So what happens next?

Tomorrow, the House Delegates will likely deliberate and decide if they will accept the Senate rate increases for DD services. If the Senate amendments to increase DD Funding percentages in the bill are rejected and reduced in any way, the bill will be referred to a Conference Committee.

Conference committees are usually comprised of 3 members of the House Committee (EMC) and 3 members of the Senate Committee (FIN), but that is not a rule, so we don't know yet who will be on the conference committee.

It is critical that rate increases adopted by the Senate prevail, and we are asking you to take action ASAP to help make that happen by calling and emailing your Delegates!

In addition to your calls and emails, we also need you to come back to Annapolis for one more incredible push of advocacy!

We will be asking advocates to come to Annapolis this Monday, March 18th, at 3 p.m., to be a presence as legislators are walking between committee meetings and full chamber sessions. We will send more information regarding Monday to you tomorrow, but please save the date and time now and make every effort to join us on Monday!

Because Monday is also "Crossover" Day (the day when all bills must cross from one chamber to the next, it will be a very busy and unpredictable day, schedule-wise. Even though we do not have a predictable time to gather for briefings and meet with representatives, it is going to be important for us to have a **strong visible presence**. Only YOU can make that happen.

TAKE ACTION NOW:

1. Please call AND email your House Delegates (click link for full list).

2. Please also contact the Speaker of the House, Mike Busch, regardless of whether he is your delegate.
(michael.busch@house.state.md.us, 410-841-3800 | 301-858-3800)

Sample Message:

"Dear Delegate _____"/"Dear Speaker Busch,"
(Tell them your name and relationship (advocate, parent, provider, friend)... and I am calling you about HB166 (the Fight for \$15 bill).

"People with developmental disabilities are counting on you to save their services."

"I need you to please support the Senate rate increases for developmental disability services with **absolutely no reductions.**"

"These DD percentages in the bill were carefully calculated based specifically on the needs of the developmental disability community services rate system. Not all provider groups in the bill need, nor have they requested, the same rate increases."

"In the bill, DD Community Services funding percentages are higher than other medicaid providers for the first three years of the Minimum Wage phase in due to the fact that DD Providers are starting with a lower base of funding insufficiency. In addition, the increases are based on the numbers of people served and services provided. These are not the same as other medicaid providers."

"Without critical funding through the percentages contained in the Senate bill, DD Community Services will no longer exist... but people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will still be here and in need. We CANNOT do this to our fellow Marylanders with disabilities and their families. "

Why are DD services different from other Medicaid providers?

- DD Community Service Providers have no **other substantial source of funding for services** other than the Medicaid funds (administered through DDA.) In addition DD providers are prohibited from charging fees for Medicaid-funded services. DD services do not have a “private pay” side of their services to complement the Medicaid-funded services.

- **75% of the total DD Community Service Provider workforce earns less than \$15 per hour.**

- People with developmental disabilities experience barriers to employment. As a result many are **unemployed or under-employed** and do not have much, if anything, in savings that would allow them enough resources to **private-pay for their care**. Their families have spent much of their own income caring for their son or daughter with disabilities and they too have no funds to pay for private services.

- DD services are **by and large provided in the community**. Unlike nursing homes, medical day care, and home health, People with disabilities spend significant portions of their day out and about in the community. Working in the DD Community Services system requires a higher skill level of staff who can function with little to no direct supervision.

- DD direct support staff have to be able to manage multiple responsibilities, unlike staff in other types of services where there are separate staff positions who separately provide care, clean the facility, cook and balance nutritional needs, etc. **ONE DD Community Worker (DSP) may be required to demonstrate ALL of the following skills and responsibilities on a daily basis:**

- Manage health (appointments, labwork, etc.) and medications

- Support people with complex **behavioral issues** that may jeopardize the person’s own safety or safety of other community members.

- Provide **personal care assistance**.

-Help people obtain and maintain employment.

-Help people **manage** their **benefits** and their **finances**, and **shop for the things they need**.

-Help people **build** friend and family **relationships** and deal with **sexuality**.

-Conduct home maintenance, prepare balanced meals and perform housekeeping duties.

Services for almost 25,000 Marylanders with developmental disabilities will be in jeopardy if the Senate rate increases are not adopted!

Please see the following infographics that we hope you will use to help you in your advocacy.

**Your Advocacy is Necessary Now
in the "Fight for Our Lives"**