

I am writing to urge you to support the Special Appropriation of \$250,000 for the Department of Health and Human Services' Respite Care Program. Respite care is not a luxury for my family. It is an essential lifeline that helps us safely and sustainably care for our son, who has severe intellectual and physical disabilities. Our son receives weekend respite care, and those hours make a profound difference in his life. During his respite visits, he is supported by caring, trained staff who understand his needs. He has the chance to interact with peers like him and participates in engaging activities tailored specifically for him. Just as importantly, respite care strengthens our entire family. Because our son's needs are so significant, he often requires most of the attention at home. It can be difficult to provide the time and support our neurotypical children also deserve. During respite care, we are able to truly be present for his siblings by listening to them, supporting them, and giving them additional attention. It also allows us as parents the opportunity to recharge emotionally and physically. This helps us continue caring for our son at home with patience, love, and stability. This funding would help ensure that families like ours can continue to meet the needs of our loved ones without burning out. It would also give our children with disabilities the support, community, and dignity they deserve. Thank you for your consideration and for supporting families in our community.