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Statement from #bFair2DirectCare Coalition On Governor's Failure to Include New Funding for Direct Care Workers In the Executive Budget

#bFair2DirectCare could not have been clearer in what's needed in this year's budget to help direct care workers achieve a **living wage** – the very kind of economic justice Governor Cuomo has championed for other working New Yorkers – \$45 million.

“What Governor Cuomo proposed can be simply described as ‘bupkis.’ It’s an old Yiddish phrase gently translated as ‘nothing.’

“In a budget where he called \$163 million for his college tuition program ‘a rounding error,’ it’s baffling that he could not offer a fraction of that to help non-profits take a first step toward providing a living wage for people whose job it is to bathe, feed, dress, medicate and serve people with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, brain injury and other developmental disabilities.

“If \$163 million is a rounding error, as the Governor stated last night, then what’s less than a third of that? Barely even a typo in a \$150 billion-plus budget.

“Governor Cuomo fails to recognize that non-profits provide this service on the state’s behalf and for less than the state can provide the same services. Yet he endorses and perpetuates a state funding scheme that leaves non-profit providers no leeway in paying workers a salary that provides for their families, which is why many direct care workers must work second or third jobs or are tempted to leave the field for better paying jobs in fast food and big box stores. In addition, he even proposes to eliminate the statutory cost of living adjustment.

“Many direct care workers work full time and still qualify for food stamps. That’s justice?

“The time is now for Governor Cuomo to widen his ‘middle class’ focus to support these New Yorkers who support others.

“Yesterday, direct care workers and the good people they support stood outside the Governor’s Mansion in freezing temperatures while he briefed legislators on the budget. Governor Cuomo still has a chance to become their hero, instead of leaving them out in the cold.

“**#bFair2DirectCare** is more than a half a million strong and we are New York.”

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#bFair2DirectCare members include

Alliance of Long Island Agencies (ALIA)
Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (CP of NYS)
The Developmental Disability Alliance of Western New York (DDAWNY)
Direct Support Professional Alliance of New York State (DSPANYS)
The InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies (IAC)
The NYS Association of Community Residential Agencies (NYSACRA)
NYSARC Inc.
New York State Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA)
Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS)

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