



As we head into the final days of state budget negotiations, we've initiated a push for the Legislature to include language that expresses its intent to include the additional installments of living wage funding for direct support professionals (DSPs) for the next four state fiscal years.

The Assembly and Senate one-house budget proposals included funding for the second installment of a six-year plan to bring DSPs to a living wage. The funding was also included in the Governor's Executive Budget.

But due to the state's fiscal constraints, neither house has been able to include the **#bFair2DirectCare** request for an acceleration of that program.

Nonetheless, including this "intent" language would be a big help. This language, which the Senate has advanced, pledged 3.25 percent increases to be funded every April 1 from 2019 through 2022. This is essentially the rest of the living wage program begun with the 2017-18 budget. Now we must convince the Assembly to agree to adopt that language and then advocate for it in final budget negotiations with Governor Cuomo.

This is where you can be a tremendous help. Assembly Mental Health Chair Aileen has prepared a letter asking Speaker Carl Heastie to advocate for the "intent" language. She's circulating this letter among her colleagues in the Assembly Democratic majority and asking them to sign on.

The more Assembly Democrat signatures he sees on that letter, the more likely the Speaker will be to agree to the request.

**Please contact your Assembly Democratic member and urge him or her to sign on to Assemblywoman Gunther's **#bFair2DirectCare** letter to the Speaker.**

- To find your local Assemblymember, [go to the New York Families for Disability Rights \(NYFDR\) website](http://www.nyfamilyrights.org/advocate/contact-influencers/) at <http://www.nyfamilyrights.org/advocate/contact-influencers/>

It's CRITICAL that these calls happen this week, as final decisions on the state budget are being formulated right now.