

82 Advocacy in Action Needed for Individuals with Disabilities NOW!

Dearest Advocates:

The time is NOW to speak up for children and adults with disabilities. There are a lot of possible programs that are going to be cut for the FY 2010 budget (that starts July 1, 2009) if **YOU** do not get involved.

Below is an email from Unlock the Waiting lists! Please contact **YOUR** state senator and representative letting them know you would support an increase to cigarette taxes in order to generate the \$\$\$ needed to support programs for individuals with disabilities.

Phone calls are best right now. They are looking to vote on the budget on Monday.

We must unite our voices during this time for our families. If the legislators do not hear from you, the possibilities are devastating for the programs and services that support individuals with disabilities.

Go to: www.unlockthewaitinglists.com for more information on this important issue.

“UNITED – WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!”

Sincerely,

Heidi

(Proud Mother to Jacob - 9 yrs old with Down syndrome and Jared - 7 yrs old)

“Help the Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!”

www.heidijmoore.com

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We need your help in asking him to support the only way we believe that we will be able to prevent very harmful cuts to CURRENT disability supports!

Would you call his office and tell him that you live in his district and ask him whether he would support a cigarette tax? Based on the official fiscal note, a \$1.00 per pack increase, along with an increase in the tax imposed on loose and smokeless tobacco from 10 to 25 percent and would generate approximately \$450 million in state revenues in FY 2010. This sort of tax has been found to reduce the number of people who smoke in other states, which will save our children's lives. Source:
<http://www.gbpi.org/documents/20090221.pdf>

Many legislators have responded that they are struggling to balance the state budget. Saying that they support our issues but that they cannot find the money in these tough times. But they are more afraid of voting for anything that appears to be a tax than the

idea of cutting important supports to people with disabilities. They think that you would rather have less help with your loved one! Actually, the opposite is true in Georgia. According to a poll by Beth Schapiro and Associates in Jan 2009, 71% of Georgians would pay \$1 more on a pack of cigarettes if it went to preventing cuts to Medicaid supports.

They need to know that people in their district support a cigarette tax! Source:
<http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/2009survey.pdf>

Continue to ask them to not cut services for people with disabilities by using any "savings" from the enhanced Medicaid FMAP due to the passage of ARRA to restore \$8,759,938 in DHR's Developmental Disability program accounts. These programs offer important statewide supports for children and adults with developmental disabilities living in the community. They also enable individuals and families to better care for themselves through services such as respite, family supports, day supports, and training. They are currently moving over \$42M in state funds from our DD accounts that could be used to prevent cuts.

You need to make this phone call by Friday. Would you be willing to let us know what your Representative says? We are trying to count the votes and NEED YOUR HELP!

Thank you!
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