

August 4, 2020

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders McConnell, Schumer and McCarthy and Speaker Pelosi:

As you negotiate over the next coronavirus stimulus/relief package, we request that you provide a minimum of \$30 million in financial support to the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 programs, specifically \$10 million each for the State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Councils), the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), and the Protection and Advocacy (P&As) programs as they work to mitigate the health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals with developmental disabilities.

Americans with developmental disabilities are amongst those whose lives are most disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have warned that people with disabilities are at a higher risk of contracting the disease.¹ Additionally, these individuals rely on a wide array of in-home services to maintain their health and well-being, many of which have been interrupted or completely halted as a result of the pandemic.² While there is a lack of national data on the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities, reports have revealed the disproportionate effect the

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Coronavirus Disease 2019, People with Disabilities," <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-disabilities.html>

² Washington Post, "For those needing in-home care, a dire decision amid a pandemic," Chelsea Janes, May 5, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/for-those-needing-in-home-care-a-dire-decision-amid-a-pandemic/2020/05/05/e271d18c-88b5-11ea-ac8a-fe9b8088e101_story.html

pandemic is having on the community.^{3,4} As the pandemic continues and services designed to support the nation's most vulnerable crumble, individuals with developmental disabilities are increasingly at risk.

Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As are federally-funded programs under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. These entities are charged with working to identify and solve the issues facing individuals with developmental disabilities in their communities. They provide training and technical assistance to policymakers as they work remove barriers that prevent individuals with development disabilities from having their voices heard. The 56 Councils, 57 P&As, and 67 UCEDDs across the United States also work closely with local, state, and federal governments to develop robust policy solutions aimed at empowering these individuals and promoting self-determination.⁵ During the pandemic, these programs have rapidly stood up virtual platforms to ensure that the voices and needs of individuals with developmental disorders can be heard and met even as traditional health care and advocacy is interrupted. They continue to ensure that state and federal responses to the pandemic consider and account for the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. However, the economic consequences of the pandemic have jeopardized the ability of the Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As to appropriately respond to and meet the needs of those they serve.

To mitigate the harm done by the COVID-19 pandemic, the House of Representatives' Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act included \$10 million for the Developmental Disabilities Act programs.⁶ We applaud this provision of funds, but urge House and Senate leadership to provide, at a minimum, \$30 million (\$10 million each) for the Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As in the final version of the next coronavirus stimulus/relief package to address their increased need.

As the pandemic continues to disrupt lives across the country, particularly those of individuals with disabilities, federal support for Councils, UCEDS, and P&As is all the more crucial. Without federal support, the Councils, P&As, and UCEDDs will struggle to continue to serve and advocate for and with people with developmental disabilities. As such, we request that the next COVID-19 stimulus/relief bill provide \$30 million in financial support for these programs. This will allow the Developmental Disabilities

³ New York Times, "Homes for the Disabled See a Surge of COVID-19," Danny Hakim, April 17, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/nyregion/coronavirus-disabilities-group-homes.html?fbclid=IwAR0oFLCIfEGfE9H2vrfMMEN6WZZdIOBiKraJN1erYXHwADqpd68uvcMg0NM>; Washington Post, "Group homes for disabled adults grapple with the spread of coronavirus," Rebecca Tan, April 18, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/group-homes-for-disabled-adults-grapple-with-the-spread-of-coronavirus/2020/04/18/ac2ecae2-7ff2-11ea-a3ee-13e1ae0a3571_story.html

⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/09/872401607/covid-19-infections-and-deaths-are-higher-among-those-with-intellectual-disabili>

⁵ Administration for Community Living, "Fact Sheet: State Councils on Developmental Disabilities," https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2016-11/Councils_factsheet.pdf

⁶ H.R.6800, The Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6800>

Network programs to continue to provide crucial support to individuals with developmental disabilities and ensure their voices are heard.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Tschida".

John Tschida
Acting Executive Director, AUCD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Decker".

Curt Decker
Executive Director, NDRN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna A. Meltzer".

Donna Meltzer
Executive Director, NACDD