



October 2, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Chairwoman Nita Lowey
House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Chairwoman Lowey:

We write to thank you for introducing and passing an updated version of The Heroes Act and specifically for the \$50 million to support activities authorized in the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act). Collectively, our respective organizations work to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities while also serving as the membership associations for the State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Councils), the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), and the Protection and Advocacy (P&As) which are all federally-funded programs under the DD Act.

The Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As 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 to remove barriers that prevent individuals with developmental 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.¹ 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 healthcare 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.

While we applaud the House for including \$50 million in the updated version of The Heroes Act for programs under the DD Act, we request that as negotiations continue on this stimulus/relief package that language be included that specifically splits the \$50 million as close to equally as possible between the Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As in the final version of the package. This will ensure that these three programs have clear and dedicated funding streams as they continue to work to mitigate the health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals with developmental disabilities.

¹ Administration for Community Living, "Fact Sheet: State Councils on Developmental Disabilities," https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2016-11/Councils_factsheet.pdf

As the pandemic continues with no end in sight, federal support for the Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As is all the more crucial in order to better protect individuals with disabilities. Without dedicated federal support, the Councils, P&As, and UCEDDs will struggle to continue to serve and advocate for and with people with developmental disabilities and ensure their voices are heard.

Again, we thank you for the introduction and passage of an updated version of The Heroes Act and the \$50 million to support activities authorized in the DD Act. We reiterate our request that language be included in the final version of this legislation that specifically splits this funding as close to equally as possible between the Councils, UCEDDs, and P&As in the final version of the package. We also strongly urge the Senate to build on the House's work and take up this piece of legislation in order to more quickly provide much needed relief for people with disabilities.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



John Tschida
Acting Executive Director, AUCD



Curt Decker
Executive Director, NDRN



Donna Meltzer
Executive Director, NACDD

CC: House Appropriations Committee
Majority Leader McConnell
Minority Leader Schumer