

Media Contacts: Patti Becker, [beckerp@clanet.org](mailto:beckerp@clanet.org); (608) 240-8503  
Jason Glozier, [jglozier@wcilc.org](mailto:jglozier@wcilc.org) (608) 422-0525  
Tami Jackson, [tamara.jackson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:tamara.jackson@wisconsin.gov); (608) 228-7285

## No deal is better than a bad deal.

### Short-sighted proposal puts state programs at risk next budget

Yesterday, the Governor and Republican State Assembly announced a proposal for a one-time tax rebate and permanent reductions in the amount of money the state collects to support state programs and services in exchange for some increases in education spending. Survival Coalition is concerned that acting on this proposal now puts many critical state programs and services at risk of budget cuts in the future.

During the regular budget process, the legislature chose not to fund many important programs at the level requested and made promises to special education that it didn't keep. This year, the state budget promised schools would get 42 cents back for every dollar spent on special education but did not set aside enough money to cover actual costs so the reimbursement dropped to 35 cents on the dollar. The legislature could have acted during the regular session to provide the amount of money promised but chose not to do so.

This proposal again promises the same reimbursement rate as passed in July's budget and sets an aspirational 50% special education reimbursement rate without changing the structural reason why the amount promised to schools for special education never materializes.

"A phantom 50% reimbursement rate is not real unless there is a guarantee that sufficient funding will be provided to cover actual costs," said Tami Jackson, Survival Coalition co-chair. "This proposal does not change special education from a "sum certain" to a "sum sufficient" appropriation. We have seen this cycle repeat where the amount of money set aside continues to result in special education funding shortfalls. We can't continue to cheer for empty promises."

"The legislature did not choose to fully fund the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation when the budget passed in July," said Jason Glozier, Survival Coalition Co-Chair. "In December, the Department asked for additional money because so many people want to work. The legislature chose not to act. Now people with disabilities who want to work are being told no, you must wait or utilize more costly Medicaid services, and they are being told they will wait at least a year for help. The Governor and Legislature are willing to spend the state's

savings and reduce the pot of money used to support state programs, but they are not willing to make sure the actual needs of people with disabilities are being met now?”

“The disability community has been relentless in its advocacy for better pay and benefits for care workers, better support for unpaid caregivers, and the [real-world consequences for people with disabilities and families](#) when there is no one to hire and no one who can fill in the gaps,” said Patti Becker, Survival Coalition Co-Chair. “This proposal does not address the ongoing caregiver crisis or many other supports that keep people living independently in their homes, able to stay in the workforce, and able to stay out of expensive Medicaid funded institutions.”

Since HR 1 passed last July, states have been struggling with SNAP and Medicaid cuts and changes to the Affordable Care Act Marketplaces. HR 1 is already impacting state budgets, threatening disability and home and community based services. Many states have already proposed disability-specific cuts to offset lost federal funding. Disability advocates are anticipating more federal funding cuts in the coming months.

“The states that reduced revenue by making tax cuts in good times are in a worse position to manage federal cuts now,” said Jackson. “[State budget surpluses and rainy day funds are not enough](#) to make up for federal cuts, increased costs, or revenue losses. A one-time \$300 check now could be paid for in cuts to critical state functions next budget. That’s a high price.”