



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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To: Members of the Wisconsin State Senate

From: Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

**Subject: Thank you for supporting Senate Bill 377 and Senate Bill 380:
Bills to lift the caps on Family Care and remove the words “mental retardation” from state law**

On Tuesday you will vote on two bills that are very important to people with disabilities in Wisconsin. Over the last few months many of you have been hearing from self-advocates, family members and advocates for people with disabilities across the state requesting your support for both SB 377 and SB 380.

SB 377 removes harmful language from our state laws – the words “mental retardation” – that have stigmatized people with disabilities for far too long. The removal of this term will not change funding, eligibility or supports for people with disabilities, but will make a big difference to many individuals and will bring our state in line with the thinking of other major medical organizations and health agencies.

SB 380 lifts the caps on Wisconsin’s long-term care programs – including Family Care, IRIS, PACE and Family Care Partnership – that were placed in the state budget. The Department of Health Services has presented solid information which demonstrates that our long-term care system is sustainable and cost-effective, in addition to being extremely vital to the lives of tens of thousands of people with disabilities and seniors. Last week this bill passed the Senate Health Committee by unanimous vote. We hope this strong show of bi-partisanship will also be demonstrated on the Senate floor. Swift passage of this legislation in both the Senate and Assembly is important to not only the more than 8,000 eligible individuals on the state’s waiting list, but for the maintenance of \$1.7 billion in federal funds.

Thank you to the many Senators who have already put their names on these bills and stood alongside people with disabilities in Wisconsin. We are grateful for your leadership.

Survival Coalition Co-Chairs

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The Survival Coalition is comprised of over 40 statewide groups representing people with all disabilities and all ages, their family members, advocates and providers of disability services. For over 20 years Survival has been at the forefront of promoting cost effective, community- based services and supports for people with disabilities.