



*For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities*

Governor Maura Healey  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02133

The Arc of Massachusetts  
217 South Street  
Waltham, MA 02453-2710  
781.891.6270  
[arcmass@arcmass.org](mailto:arcmass@arcmass.org)  
[www.arcmass.org](http://www.arcmass.org)

***Achieve with us.***

Brian Cusack  
President

Maura Sullivan, MPA  
Chief Executive Officer

December 8, 2025

Dear Governor Healey:

Thank you for your work on the many critical matters before you. We write to you today as the **IDD/Autism Alliance**. Led by The Arc of Massachusetts, this coalition brings together the leading advocacy organizations for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Massachusetts. The undersigned organizations write to you to share urgent budget priorities related to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism. As your administration prepares the FY27 state budget, we urge you to consider the perfect storm of challenges that our community is facing: cuts to Medicaid that threaten funding and eligibility, an ongoing workforce crisis, all while the population grows in size and acuity.

#### Workforce Crisis

We are all deeply concerned about the significant and ongoing workforce crisis within the human services field. For years, this sector has struggled to recruit and retain staff due to low rates of pay, established through Chapter 257. Currently the Chapter 257 rates are tied to the 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), translating to an average of approximately \$20/hour for direct care staff. This is simply not a livable wage in Massachusetts, and it forces dedicated workers to work multiple jobs or leave the field entirely. While our long-term goal is to raise Chapter 257 to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, **we urge you to maintain the Chapter 257 rates at the 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile for FY27**. Any cuts to this line item would be utterly devastating.

Given federal immigration changes, we also expect to see staggering new challenges. A significant portion of the human services workforce is made up of immigrants, particularly those from Haiti on Temporary Protected Status. As deportations and antihumanitarian actions continue, we will see even more staff vacancies in programs. This directly results in thousands of people stuck on waiting lists for services. These individuals are left underserved or completely unserved, isolated at home, losing skills, and straining family members who are often forced to sacrifice their own employment and needs.

### Protecting Medicaid

The federal reconciliation bill, signed into law in July by the President, made devastating cuts to vital programs like Medicaid and SNAP. Our immediate concern is focused on the **downstream impacts of federal reimbursement cuts and state budget tightening on Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports (LTSS)** that will exacerbate existing crises. We are also deeply concerned about people with IDD and autism **losing eligibility for services through redeterminations and work requirements.**

### The Perfect Storm

This community is growing and on average has higher support needs. They and their families need access to care, more support in the home and community, and more flexibility when underserved. But simultaneously, we stand to face cuts due to dangerous federal policies that will cause the state budget to constrict and the workforce to further shrink. Particularly for those with complex medical or behavioral challenges, it is essential that they have a robust system to support them.

We cannot move backwards. Given the scope of current challenges, we support efforts by your administration and the legislature to consider all possible strategies, including raising revenues and responsibly tapping into the rainy day fund to ensure that we continue to care for the most vulnerable in our communities.

Massachusetts leads the country by valuing all its residents. Now is the time to invest in and bolster this service system for people with intellectual disabilities and autism. Thank you for your leadership and for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Maura Sullivan  
CEO, **The Arc of Massachusetts**

Barbara L'Italien  
Executive Director and CEO, **Disability Law Center, Inc.**

Anna Krieger  
Executive Director, **Massachusetts Advocates for Children**

Harry Weissman  
Executive Director, **Disability Policy Consortium**

Maureen Gallagher  
Executive Director, **Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress**

Brian Kremer  
Executive Director, **Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong**

Brenda Dater  
Executive Director, **Association for Autism and Neurodiversity (AANE)**

Qian Zhuang  
President, **AllStars Learning**

Jason Fogler  
Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental & related Disabilities (**LEND**) Program at **Boston Children's Hospital**