



**LB1011 - Provide, Change, and Eliminate Provisions Relating to Appropriations
Hearing Jan. 24th, 2022**

Good afternoon Chairman Stinner and members of the Committee,

My name is Alana Schriver and I'm the Executive Director of the Nebraska Association of Service Providers, the state-wide trade association for Developmental Disability service providers. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people we support and employ.

I want to express our sincere gratitude for the temporary 15% rate increase (announced January 19th; lasting Jan-June, 2022), without which few providers would be able to keep their doors open. It is truly a lifeline.

Amongst all the rush and noise of a new session, we call upon legislators to not look away from an important reality: that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who rely on home- and community-based services (HCBS) are drowning in the dual crises of an emaciated workforce and an unrelenting pandemic.

While we support this proposed budget and don't want to sound ungrateful, the truth is, it doesn't go far enough. Which is why we are asking for your support of LB1172 sponsored by Sen. Hilkemann (to appropriate general ARPA funds for a rate increase for certain I/DD programs requiring staff), and LB893 sponsored by Chairman Stinner (to make the temporary 15% rate increase permanent). Thank you both for your sponsorship on this critical legislation.

Such investments are the minimum necessary for Nebraska to build back a sustainable HCBS infrastructure that can start to address the magnitude of unmet need in our communities. This funding would not only strengthen the ability of people with disabilities to live a life with dignity in their homes and communities, as well as attracting desperately needed staff and boosting local economies. A temporary rate increase only offers a temporary fix. We need to fund rates at a level that will prevent a cliff effect moving forward into future budget cycles.

NASP remains committed to protecting and strengthening supports for people with disabilities, (like my son who is currently on the waitlist for services). We request that same commitment from State Leadership.