



July 15, 2025

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito,
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin,
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Moore Capito and Aderholt and Ranking Members Baldwin and DeLauro,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Health Task Force, CCD Developmental Disabilities, Autism, and Family Support Task Force, and allied organizations, we write to express our deep concern about the Administration's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget proposal and urge Congress to reject the harmful recommendations it contains regarding the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), Projects of National Significance (PNS), Limb Loss Resource Center, Paralysis Resource Center, and the Protection and Access for Voting Access (PAVA) Program. The Administration's proposal to eliminate these programs is both dangerous and disregards the tremendous harms that will result.

The FY 2026 budget justification proposes eliminating the UCEDDs and four other unique programs while consolidating their funding into the Independent Living (IL) program under a single, broad allocation:

“The FY 2026 request for Independent Living is \$228,183,000. It includes a proposal allowing the expanded funding to be used to continue the activities previously provided by University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance, the Limb Loss Resource Center, and the Paralysis Resource Center, and providing Voting Access for People with Disabilities. Allowing funding in each state to be distributed based on state need increases program flexibility and improves the ability to target funding as needed.”

Each of the five programs proposed for elimination were created to address distinct and urgent needs in the disability community:

- **UCEDDs** develop and implement evidence-based practices, train the disability workforce, and partner with states and communities on policy innovation and systems change. They are congressionally authorized programs with over 60 years of bipartisan support. They serve as trusted institutions that bridge research, training, and community services to support individuals with developmental disabilities across the lifespan. Their elimination would not only dismantle essential state-based infrastructures but also jeopardize decades of progress in areas like early intervention, inclusive education, health equity, and workforce development.
- **Projects of National Significance (PNS)** support cutting-edge demonstration projects that inform national policy and generate scalable solutions.
- **The Limb Loss Resource Center** provides education, peer support, workforce transition support, and healthcare navigation for veterans and civilians who are at risk of, or have had, an amputation and those born with limb differences. The program collaborates with over 155 hospitals across the US to ensure that support services and educational resources are available to individuals, their families, and caregivers before and after amputation, and to parents when a child is born with a limb difference. With over 1500 active volunteers and 189 community-based support groups connected through the network, the program, which has been federally funded since 1997, has supported the creation of an infrastructure that optimizes every dollar for efficiency and effectiveness. The elimination of this program would severely deteriorate the support services available to the over 5.6 million individuals living with limb loss or limb difference in the US.
- **The Paralysis Resource Center** addresses the needs of individuals, caregivers and military veterans impacted by paralysis, including access to rehabilitation, equipment, peer mentoring, and independent living. The Paralysis Resource Center also directs funds to organizations providing direct services to communities across the country.
- **The Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA) program** ensures that Americans with disabilities can fully exercise their constitutionally guaranteed rights to vote independently and privately through the nationwide network of Protection and Advocacy agencies. In 2024, the PAVA program individually served nearly 1,000 individuals, provided information and referrals or technical assistance to almost 3,500 people, delivered training to nearly 63,000 individuals,

and impacted almost 29.5 million individuals through group advocacy to ensure accessibility of the voting system for people with disabilities.

While all of these programs are vital, they serve distinct populations, have specialized goals, and operate through targeted delivery systems. Eliminating them and collapsing their funding into a single funding stream under the IL program not only undermines the statutory intent of each program, but also ignores the fundamental differences in scope, expertise, and administration.

Furthermore, this shift is effectively block granting funding to states without clear guidance, governance, or accountability mechanisms. In practice, this approach would force programs, often with differing missions and constituencies, to compete against one another for limited funding. Programs that were once guaranteed federal funding based on national priorities and needs would now be pitted against each other, risking underinvestment, service gaps, and fragmentation of care. Block granting this funding threatens to erase decades of specialized investment in the disability community and shift the burden to states to replicate national infrastructure without the capacity to do so.

The Independent Living program plays an essential role in the disability service ecosystem, but it was never designed to absorb the responsibilities of five separate national programs. Expecting IL programs, already underfunded, to absorb training, research, clinical expertise, national resource centers, and complex systems-level technical assistance is not realistic and will result in the erosion of all these efforts. We stand with our IL community and their need for increased funding, yet they cannot absorb the work of these five programs.

We appreciate the Subcommittee's longstanding bipartisan support for UCEDDs and the broader disability services and research infrastructure. Your leadership is essential now more than ever, to protect the integrity of the other programs targeted for elimination, and reject proposals that would undermine our national disability infrastructure through consolidation and block granting.

The disability community deserves sustained, coordinated support, not funding models that sow competition and instability among critical programs. Thank you for your attention to this urgent request and for your continued commitment to the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities across the lifespan.

Sincerely,

Access Ready Inc.

Allies for Independence

American Association on Health and Disability

American Music Therapy Association

Amputee Coalition

Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA)

Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
CommunicationFIRST
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Disability Belongs
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Family Voices National
Institute for Exceptional Care
Lakeshore Foundation
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Family Association for DeafBlind
National Health Law Program
National Respite Coalition
TASH
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies