



Letter to the Editor: Provider Drafts

Below are three draft Letters to the Editor with three distinct focuses. Each template has highlighted information to fill-in so it's easy to customize and send your letter.

OPTION 1 (Need for Medicaid Funding):

To the editor:

The Department of Labor's proposed increase to the overtime salary threshold is being rightfully championed and is long overdue in the private sector. The rule change will increase eligibility for overtime pay. But for disability service providers in [STATE], it poses a significant threat. We are already struggling to pay our workers what they deserve when our only funding comes from Medicaid, and reimbursement rates aren't being raised to account for this change. Lawmakers can't demand higher wages for workers without also increasing our ability to pay them. For years, disability service advocates have been calling for additional funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS).

In [STATE], workers who support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are paid as low as TKTK per hour. As their employer, we only get reimbursed TKTK per hour. It's becoming increasingly impossible to continue to serve people with disabilities in our state at these rates. Without increased funding from Medicaid, we will not be able to comply with the new overtime rule without making cuts to our services, further hurting individuals with disabilities. [Placeholder for state data/personal anecdote if available].

Before implementing this rule, The Department of Labor should partner with disability service providers to develop a sustainable plan that recognizes providers' financial limitations while ensuring the rights and service access for individuals with disabilities. I urge the DOL to listen to our voices and collaborate with us to find a solution that doesn't compromise the quality and accessibility of these essential services.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Job Title]

OPTION 2 (Potential of Program and Service Cuts):

To the editor:

The Department of Labor's proposed increase to the overtime salary threshold marks progress for workers' rights but poses a significant threat to disability service providers in [STATE]. The new salary threshold, raising eligibility for overtime pay, poses a financial burden on these providers, who will have to make difficult decisions – including shuttering and reducing services – to comply.

At [organization], our incredible Disability Service Providers (DSPs) support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), offering a range of critical services from medical assistance to fostering social connections. We have been advocating to raise their wages for years, but unfortunately our hands remain tied, because Medicaid reimbursement rates set the wages we are able to pay. [Placeholder for anecdote/services offered]. Notwithstanding additional Medicaid funding, in order to absorb the costs of the mandated wage increases by the DOL, we would need to consider cutting or scaling back our service offerings and programs. This could potentially have a devastating impact on individuals with disabilities who rely on our support.

Forcing an increase in the salary threshold for overtime without funding could collapse essential I/DD services already on the edge. Urgent action is crucial. We are calling on the Department of Labor to slow the implementation of this rule and work with disability service providers to prevent service cuts.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Job Title]

OPTION 3 (Workforce Retention):

To the editor:

As a dedicated disability service provider, I'm deeply concerned about the potential fallout from the Department of Labor's proposed increase to the overtime salary threshold. Despite aiming to safeguard workers, this rule poses a serious threat to the stability of disability services in [STATE]. Service providers rely on Medicaid rates to set wages and fund services, but these have remained stagnant for years. This new rule offers no extra help, putting providers in a tough spot – pay DSPs fair wages or keep essential services running.

As [JOB TITLE], these Medicaid rates limit my ability to pay my Disability Service Providers (DSPs) fair wages, particularly in [state], where wages fall below acceptable levels. [Placeholder for state wage data if available]. Recruiting and keeping workers on these wages is challenging, leading to compromised care due to a growing staffing crisis. Adapting to the new salary threshold will strain resources, forcing tough choices like limiting overtime or cutting staff.

While the intentions behind this overtime rule change are good, the reality that it poses for disability service providers is catastrophic. In [STATE], it would cut overtime and lead to job losses. We urgently ask the DOL to consider a revised timeline to prevent services for individuals with disabilities from collapsing and protect disability service jobs.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Job Title]