(Your name and address)

(Date)

Dear (Assemblymember or Senator):

**I am writing about the crisis facing service providers for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD).** More than 330,000 Californians with I/DD live in our state; they are our neighbors, classmates, coworkers, family, and friends. However, their support structure has been grossly underfunded and is failing. Reimbursement rates have not increased in 20 years. Direct support staff are quitting the field or working multiple jobs due to low wages, essential programs are closing throughout the state, and individuals with I/DD are forced to live with inadequate supports or without supports at all.

As a (family member, staff, or supporter) of Villa Esperanza Services, I am advocating on behalf of all those with I/DD throughout the state who depend on the services that Villa and other nonprofits provide. (Please share your story here.)

These vital services are in jeopardy due to the severe financial constraints under which Villa and other service providers are forced to operate. California’s lawmakers must fund the services and supports that people with I/DD rely on to access their civil rights. **An 8% rate increase will provide the emergency stabilization that our community desperately needs.**

Additionally, for the first time in 25 years, the State has hired consultants to take a hard look at how much the State should support critical services for individuals with I/DD. A draft of the Rate Study as mandated by ABX2-1 was published on March 15th by the Department of Developmental Services. It is critical that all stakeholders have an opportunity to fully vet all key assumptions in this study. We must discuss where and how these assumptions will lead to unintended, negative, and potentially disastrous consequences and then, agree on how we can work together to modify these key assumptions.

**Please make this a legislative priority for your office in the coming year** and support and maintain California’s historic role in protecting the rights of individuals with I/DD. Thank your time and help with this important matter.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)