[MLA Name]

[MLA Street Address

[MLA City/Town], Manitoba [Postal Code]

[MLA Email Address]

[Today’s Date]

Dear [MLA Name],

I’m writing about a dire need in our Province. Community Living disAbility Services (CLDS) provides supports to 7000 adults and includes funding to 95 non-profit organizations. Those organizations have faced recruitment and retention challenges since the inception of community living. During the COVID-19 pandemic period, cracks have become canyons and organizations are struggling hour by hour to maintain staffing and provide needed supports and services. Our sector is in desperate need of a substantial funding increase in order to continue to provide these valuable services. The labour crisis has devastated many organizations and had significant and negative impacts on the people receiving services and their families. The risk of these services crumbling as a result of lack of staffing is very real and requires the Province’s swift action.

• Since 2000, funding to CLDS non-profit organizations (NPOs) has lagged 24.5% behind cost-of-living increases. This does not include the recent spike in cost of living associated with COVID.

• Funding to CLDS day services for staff wages is a mere 20 cents higher than our minimum wage. Manitoba’s minimum wage is second lowest in Canada. Funding to CLdS residential supports is $13.75.

• The diverse skill set needed in any front-line position simply cannot be purchased for $12-$14 per hour and sustained. As an example of the inequities, front line staff dispense medications that health care aides making up to 60% more are deemed not qualified to dispense.

• Adults with an intellectual/developmental disability will have close to 800 people provide very personal and intimate supports to them between the ages of 18-65.

• The Province pays several dollars more per hire for similar internal positions and parity is a necessity.

I am asking that the Province of Manitoba make a 3-year commitment to get funding for wages to 60% above minimum wage. I implore you to urgently address this long-standing issue that has pushed the sector to the brink.

7000 people and their families, 95 organizations with over 10,000 employees and their families— 10’s of thousands of Manitobans care about this issue and desperately need to see a swift shift to value the incredible work being done to support some of Manitoba’s most vulnerable citizens. I cannot stress enough the lengths that non-profits, individuals and families have gone to in the midst of the pandemic. Now, we need our government to demonstrate value to all including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those who continued to work through the pandemic and continue to provide the needed continuity in people’s lives. This needs to be a career option where people can earn a fair living wage. The risks are significant if resolution from the Province does not come.

[Add your additional comments here, including personal notes, stories, and experiences]

I am also aware of the recommendations of the VPA Task Force. In order to move forward and see meaningful improvements in the lives of people impacted by the legislation, financial resources are needed. Please prioritize resources to this critical work that is a direct link to peoples’ quality of life, access to services and ability to exercise their rights.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Your Name]

[Your Street Address

[Your City/Town], Manitoba [Postal Code]

[Your Email Address]