

March 27, 2010

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

I am one of the disabled Californians who depend upon In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) each day of my life. Imagine, Sir, not being able to get out of bed in the morning without help; or perhaps worse, not being able to get into bed by yourself when you are worn out after a long day of governing. Imagine food placed before you on the table that you can only look upon helplessly because you are unable to feed yourself. Imagine having no choice but to wet your pants because there is no one to help you go to the bathroom, or being too weak to sweep the floor or carry out the trash.

California's 450,000 low income seniors and persons with disabilities receiving services from IHSS are people with genuine needs. These needs range from great to small, but all are important to everyday life and we rely on the minimum services provided by IHSS to enable us to live safely in our own homes and be active, contributing members of our communities. My caregiver has placed me at the computer with my mouth-stick so I can type this letter to you.

Millions of dollars are being spent as the State and counties work to implement your new IHSS fraud prevention regulations targeting all seniors and disabled and our caregivers. Now, in addition to taking my fingerprints, you want the State to purchase cameras costing as much as \$5,000 each in order to take my picture? While I feel this picture taking is another violation of my right of privacy, our State is in financial crisis. It is my duty as a Californian to find ways to save money. I am sending you my picture, Sir. I'm sure others will too. You do not need to waste more money on expensive cameras.

As fingerprinting and picture-taking is associated with criminal activity my picture reflects how I and others are feeling now: like criminals. While the picture may appear to be in jest, I assure you it is not. The weight and import of your fraud claims weigh heavily, even as they insult my dignity. When was I charged with a crime that necessitates being treated like a suspect? Am I not innocent until proven guilty? Thus, after much thought, I decided my crime must be that of being disabled and low income. As I am soon 61, I perhaps bear the guilt of low income seniors too.

IHSS has worked well because it fostered genuine care and concern. It afforded both caregiver and the person needing care the necessary interpersonal contact on which to build trust, mutual respect, and friendship. Being rooted in care, most potential program "violations" typically arise out of our individualized needs and have been met by our caregivers with compassion. Decent people have a really hard time working in nursing homes and care facilities. With the now constant threat of fraud charges and emphasis time-tasked, streamlined services, the very heart of caring is being cut out from the IHSS Program by turning my home into an institution.

I know IHSS is a costly program. I won't bother to argue with you how much more cost-effective and humane IHSS services are when compared to the institutionalized facilities we will likely end up in when IHSS can no longer meet our needs; institutions known as "hell-holes" and "human warehouses". You know this, as surely as you know that once we are forced out of our homes into institutions that the bulk of the cost will shift to the Federal government.

Money is an important consideration and I do understand your desire to reign in IHSS costs. Still, I must wonder at your approach here. I do not understand how collecting our fingerprints and photographs does more than bully a population whose primary desire is to live in their own homes with dignity. Anyone intent on willfully abusing

the program will still do so and be caught as in the past.

Every Californian will hopefully grow old and debilitating injury or disease can strike one at any age. The long-term care needs of Californians will only increase with time. IHSS, historically among the first programs to address an aspect of this global social concern, has been a costly stand-alone program. Instead of spending millions of dollars that the State does not have on a creating fraud chasing bureaucracy whose only real outcomes will be to gut a program that has served the State well, put thousands of dedicated caregivers out of work, and victimize the seniors and disabled Californians who depend on these services, aren't there more cost-effective steps you might take? Would not these funds be better spent on finding ways to integrate IHSS services into the broader effort to address long term care needs, including perhaps channeling funds into local government and the private sectors to help communities come up with new and viable solutions?

Sincerely,
Pamela Hoye
San Diego, CA

cc: The Sacramento Bee

