**DRAFT LETTER TO GOVERNOR CUOMO TO ACCOMPANY RESOLUTION**

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

NYS State Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Over 125,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities depend on the care of direct support professionals to live, work, and learn as part of their communities. These professionals perform difficult and intimate work with people that need this support to live safe and fulfilling lives.

Tens of thousands of direct support professionals (DSPs) and other direct care workers at not-for-profit organizations help people around the clock and are part of the fabric that holds our communities together.

Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week was September 11-17, 2016.

After eight years without a significant adjustment in wages and recent increases in the minimum wage, we believe it is time for New York State to recognize the skills and knowledge of staff that support people with developmental disabilities with wages that reflect the complexity of their work. These are not minimum wage jobs and to not increase wages threatens the progress that has been made over the last four decades for people with disabilities. It’s time to say a fair day’s work equals a fair day’s pay.

We support the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition’s “300 Days to Better Pay” campaign. We ask you to recognize the compassionate and professional excellence of these individuals by supporting fair pay and a living wage for direct support professionals and other vital staff that help support tens of thousands of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. Please include funding for wage increases for the people that support people with developmental disabilities in your next state budget.

Yours truly,