

Survival Coalition: Supports focus on improving lives of people with disabilities in governor's State of the State

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(MADISON) — The Survival Coalition of more than 30 disability organizations in Wisconsin supports the Governor's focus on improving the lives of people with disabilities, including statewide end to wait lists for adult and children's long-term care programs and strengthening employment efforts for people with disabilities.

"Wisconsin is now one of the few states nationally that has committed to end wait lists for long-term supports across the age span," said Beth Swedeen, Survival co-chair. "Survival also has supported employment efforts, and is eager to see a strong Employment First bill in the Legislature that we hope is soon signed into law."

Survival continues to support efforts in the coming year to increase investments in special education funding to equip students with disabilities for employment and adult life. "Special education has not had an increase in more than a decade, yet costs to educate students continue to rise," said Lisa Pugh, co-chair. "We hope to see bi-partisan support in the months ahead to address this critical need."

Survival also is concerned about the impacts of proposed state changes to welfare requirements that could impact people with disabilities, particularly hidden

disabilities, and their caregivers. “We know from the data that work requirements in welfare programs can unintentionally harm people with disabilities, chronic health problems, and the people who care for them,” said Kit Kerschensteiner, Survival co-chair.

Co-chair Maureen Ryan said Survival Coalition will continue to work with the Governor’s office and the Legislature on policies that support and equip people with disabilities for employment and full participation in their communities. “Wisconsin has a history of progressive public policy to support people with disabilities in their homes and communities, at school and on the job. We are hopeful for a productive year ahead in working collaboratively to better the lives of people with disabilities and their support systems statewide.”