Dear Rep. \_\_\_,    
  
Your attention to the plight of vulnerable people with disabilities is urgently needed. There are thousands of people with disabilities in Minnesota, many of whom reside in group homes within your jurisdiction. They are facing the IMMEDIATE THREAT of losing the services of group home providers who currently provide their care and support.    
  
The threat exists because group home providers have experienced a severe shortage of staff for a number of years. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that providers have been unable to recruit and retain qualified staff in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The key issue is that the funding currently available to attract qualified staff is insufficient to effectively compete with other employers who can offer significantly more pay for significantly easier work.    
  
Employers in retail and food service are offering starting pay of up to $22.00 per hour while group home staff, who feed, clothe, bathe, transport, and tend to the physical and emotional needs of our most vulnerable citizens, are offered wages up to $10 less per hour!    
  
(FAMILY MEMBER EXAMPLE—edit details to fit your scenario) Our daughter lives in a group home. We witness first hand the loving care along with the often heroic efforts of people dedicated to their duties.

(STAFF EXAMPLE—edit details to fit your scenario) I work in an ACR Home and have since \_\_\_\_\_\_. Given the staffing crisis, I frequently now work 1:4 which limits my residents’ abilities to leave the home, and reduces the quality of the care that I can provide to them as just one person.

I am aware of the budget surplus that exists in Minnesota and read about the numerous projects seeking additional funding. They are all deserving but none seem to me to exhibit the urgency of the funding shortage experienced by the group home providers. As a Direct Care staff and as citizens in neighborhoods under your jurisdiction, I ask that you bring this issue to the forefront at the January Legislative Session beginning January 31st.     
  
Thank you in advance for your consideration,   
  
[your name; if you are writing to the legislators where your family member is a resident of an ACR Home, note that you are writing on their behalf and the address, so that they realize you are writing as a constituent.]