

Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderama and Committee Members,

Around 2010 a friend brought me down to my local Center for Independent Living (LILA) in an effort to try and cheer me up. It worked, it truly worked. So now I've been coming to LILA for years, made lifelong friends, all the while staying active with all the daily activities and support groups that LILA provides.

When Covid-19 hit I became homeless, however LILA helped me find safe shelter and then on a regular basis a Peer Support Specialist sat with me to help me find permanent housing - which I've maintained for over a year.

Once I got my housing, and even though I hadn't worked in years due to my mental health disability, LILA offered me a job working at their Peer Support Club (a mental health drop center) as a Peer Support Assistant. I've been there for a whole year and I'm ready advance to become a Peer Support Specialist.

LILA has been the biggest support in my life since the pandemic, with the one-on-one peer support and the building of my confidence, I see me in a much better light.

In conclusion, Living Independent Alliance has saved my life so I now see me giving back to the community which was given to me so freely. I am (and will forever be) grateful that LILA exists and is such a great support.

I am writing this letter to request that this committee funds the 2.6 million-dollar request for CIL pay equity.

Thank you for allowing me to submit comments on the unique and necessary services that Centers for Independent Living provide to the disabled community.

Sincerely,

Toni Day