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Washington, DC (March 19,2020) -- On March 18, 2020, the Senate passed the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* which protects workers and assists employers in providing paid sick leave and paid family leave for families impacted by COVID-19. Unfortunately, this act does not apply to ANY non-profits because employers will receive a tax credit for the paid sick leave. Because nonprofits don't pay taxes, they do not qualify to receive the credit. One of the major issues is that an entire sector of the population is being overlooked and forgotten about during this COVID-19 pandemic, the nonprofits that do the great work that people often forget about. This includes one of the highest risk categories: which includes the intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals.

There are hundreds of thousands of individuals living with an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD) across the country that live in a group home, have a full-time caregiver, or depend on a family member to help care of them. The COVID-19 crisis is exposing key vulnerabilities in I/DD supports as many day programs and community centers are closing to limit the spread of COVID-19 but leaving individuals with these disabilities with nowhere to go. Direct support professionals, the workforce taking care of individuals with I/DD, are already in a labor shortage crisis, underpaid, and many do not have health insurance making this pandemic extremely stressful for them. The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* does not cover many of these caregivers because so many are employed by non-profits, and these caregivers cannot afford to miss work.

The real danger in these caregivers continuing to work during this pandemic is that they are working with individuals in the high-risk sector. The media is focused on how COVID-19 affects the elderly population, but no one has mentioned how this virus would also put individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in danger. Dr. Michael Kruer, Director of the Cerebral Palsy and Pediatric Movement Disorders program at the Phoenix Children's Hospital, says, "Individuals with developmental disabilities (particularly those with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy) have a higher overall risk for complications from respiratory infections. This risk is expected to extend to COVID-19. Risk is thought to arise in part because in addition to affecting voluntary movement (arm and leg function) cerebral palsy can affect more basic

movements such as the ability to cough, swallow, and clear one's throat. The Increased risk is expected to be greater for those more severely affected by their cerebral palsy."

Armando Contreras, President and CEO of United Cerebral Palsy calls on Congress to move on the vital legislation of *Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act of 2020*. HE said, "This bill must be included in this new funding package, and to highlight key policies that will strengthen I/DD supports during and after the outbreak."

The I/DD community needs to be recognized and included in the high-risk sector of COVID-19. People are stepping up and looking after the elderly and making sure children are taken care of while after school, but individuals with disabilities are being overlooked.

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### **About United Cerebral Palsy**

United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) is an indispensable resource for individuals with cerebral palsy and other disabilities, their families, and their communities. Through its Affiliate Network in the US and Canada, UCP assists thousands of people with disabilities and their families with the goal of creating a life of inclusion for individuals with disabilities. They work closely with its affiliates on issues that open doors for people with disabilities. UCP is a leader in the disability community for over 70 years and is a strong voice for individuals with disabilities and their families.