

4/21/2025

To Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

We write to oppose parental fees, specifically the proposal in HF2434 to reintroduce these fees and waivers for families with adjusted gross incomes equal to or greater than 675% of the federal poverty limits.

For many years, advocates have fought tirelessly to eliminate parental fees associated with programs like TEFRA. These fees create a significant financial burden on families who are already facing the extraordinary costs of caring for a child with disabilities. The services provided through TEFRA are not luxuries; they are essential supports that allow these children to thrive and participate in their communities.

We want to share how the elimination of these fees has directly benefited our family and allowed us to better support our daughter, who has autism. She is currently on a CDCS waiver, which provides us with crucial funds for respite care and adaptive supports. These services are not optional; they are vital for her well-being and development, and for our ability to provide her with the care she needs at home. The financial relief we've experienced since the fees were eliminated has allowed us to afford these essential services without sacrificing other critical family needs. Reinstating these fees would directly and negatively impact our ability to care for our daughter.

The argument that these fees only impact "higher-income" families is misleading and dangerous. The costs associated with raising a child with disabilities are exponentially higher than those for a child without disabilities. Even families with relatively high incomes can struggle to meet these overwhelming expenses, which include medical care, therapies, specialized equipment, and other necessary supports. Reintroducing parental fees will force families to make impossible choices between their child's care and other basic needs.

Another concern is the precedent this sets. While the current proposal targets a specific income level, history has shown that once these fees are reinstated, it becomes easier to expand them to lower-income families. This would create a devastating ripple effect, impacting the very families who are least able to afford it and further exacerbating existing inequities in access to care. We must not go down this path.

Reinstating these fees is a step backward, undermining the progress we have made and placing an undue burden on vulnerable families.

Sincerely,

Shannon and David Treichel

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