

Dear Senator John F. Hoffman,

I am sending you a letter regarding SF 2934 and the Governor's proposal to move FRS (Family Residential Services) homes from the current framework rate to a flat tiered rate as of 1/1/2026. I am begging for you to take the time to read this and take what I and all other providers have to say into consideration.

I started Adult foster care/245D services in January of 2020. Let me say it started out rough. I had three placements within six months. Two of those three had extreme behaviors.

One of those two was days away from being homeless and struggling with mental health. No one would take her in and help her due to her last eviction. While I was helping her I went through physical and mental abuse, property damage, police presence weekly (sometimes daily), and false accusations. One of the reasons they use for cutting our framework and calling us different from CRS homes is we get to sleep in our own bed. Yes, we sleep in our own beds, but what about when this resident was up all hours of the night screaming outside my bedroom door. What about when this resident would come home drunk (because her case manager allowed her to) and need to be monitored every hour. This resident accrued around \$10,000 in property damage. With this new framework they are going to put in place that property damage would have made me have to close my home leaving two other residents in need of new placement. Even after all of the damage she did to me and my home I still treated her like family. I would still drop everything when she needed help. Ex. Her friend kicked her out of her house in the middle of the night. I provided her with a stable family setting until she was ready to move on.

The second resident also had major behavioral problems. The paranoia became so bad they also accrued around \$5,000 in property damage. They began toileting in their bedroom. After months of several police calls begging for them to be brought to the hospital for an evaluation they were put into a treatment center. It took months to get rid of the odor in her bedroom. Did I mention they started smoking cigarettes in their bedroom? There was absolutely nothing I could do about it. After they moved out of my home their family continued to stay in contact with me and thanked me constantly and let me know how much of a difference I made in their kids' lives. Unfortunately, a few short months later they passed away.

My point in sharing these stories with you is to let you know FRS homes do not only take the easy people. In fact, I get more phone calls for people with behavioral issues due to CRS homes refusing to take them in due to short staff. We deal with the good, bad and ugly just like CRS homes. One area that majorly separates us is that CRS workers get to go home after their shifts and have the night or even weekend off. They get to go home to privacy. In my own home I have lost all privacy. I do not get to have several nights off a week. I have a few staff that help me out on an as needed basis so I can have a weekend off every once in a while. With the new framework I will be losing money if I want to have a night or weekend off. Meaning I will almost never be able to have a break causing major burnout and potentially needing to close my home.

I'm not even sure if I will be able to afford the expenses of running the home with how low the new framework will be.

If you look at DHS website or talk with case managers you will see/hear person centered all of the time. I think it is the greatest approach for those receiving foster care services. They deserve a say in what they want. Everyone is different and has different needs. One person could need a significant amount of more help with daily living tasks than the other. One could have extreme behaviors than another. That is a huge reason why the current framework should stay the same or even better match what CRS homes receive.

We are required to follow the same rules as CRS homes. We are required to do the same paperwork as CRS homes. BUT we offer a family setting. We get to know each person on a much deeper level. We help them with their daily goals. We help people with behavioral problems. We help people with toileting. We help people who are having anxiety/panic attacks. We help people who require micro prompts for every simple task. We help people in the middle of the night. We take them in as family. We lose all of our privacy. We lose our nights and weekends off. We lose sleep at night. If I received a dollar for every time someone said to me "I could never do your job", I'd be rich. I do love my job. Unfortunately, I do not think we can survive with the pay cuts the Governor has in place for 2026.

All we are asking for is to be paid fair rates as we deserve that. Switching our framework to a tier rate is detrimental to FRS homes. The flat rates on the tier system are not doable to keep my home functioning. We serve a great need just like CRS homes. I beg for you to fight to keep us under the rate system like the CRS homes will be.

Thank you for your time,

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