

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

How Oakland County families killed a \$215 million rate cut

Section 1033 would have stripped \$4.56 an hour out of direct care agency rates while leaving the wage mandate in place. A coalition of Michigan families made sure it never reached the governor's desk.

BY JIM PALASTY · 11 MIN READ · MICHIGAN ADVOCACY

4.56

DOLLARS PER HOUR

The cut that got written. And then unwritten.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

A line item appears

Section 1033 lands in the Michigan House health budget.



STEP 2

Providers do the math

A \$4.56 hourly cut against a mandated \$3.40 wage floor.



STEP 3

Families flood the Capitol

Action alerts, phone trees, testimony, and a Senate that said no.

The campaign, step by step

Find the number	Section 1033, House health budget
Do the arithmetic	\$4.56/hr cut vs. \$3.40/hr wage mandate
Name the harm	About 20 percent of agency funding
Pick one ask	Strike the section. Not amend. Strike.
Build the list	Providers, families, unions, county boards
Use a real tool	Incompass and MALA action alerts
Target the split	House had it. Senate did not.
Show up in person	Committee testimony, two minutes, one page
Follow the conference	Where the version fight is decided
Say thank you	In writing. Every time. It compounds.

WHAT ONE CALL LOOKED LIKE

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Denise runs a small Oakland County agency with fourteen direct care staff. She did the math on Section 1033 on a Tuesday night at her kitchen table, called nine families the next morning, and by Friday all nine had emailed their state representative with the same three sentences and the same section number. Her programs are still open.

NINE FAMILIES. ONE SECTION NUMBER. THAT IS A COALITION.

What matters, at a glance

The mechanism

Section 1033 reduced what the state paid agencies. It did not touch what agencies were required to pay workers.

The squeeze

Same wage floor. Less revenue. The gap comes out of supervision, training, scheduling, and the lights.

What \$215.8 million buys

Roughly a fifth of agency funding for the services that keep Level 2 and Level 3 adults out of institutions. Providers said plainly that some programs would close. In a workforce crisis, a closed program does not reopen.

Who actually moved it

The Arc of Oakland County, Incompass Michigan, the Michigan Assisted Living Association, and the Direct Care Worker Wage Coalition ran a single coordinated ask instead of eleven competing ones. That is the whole trick. One section number, one position, one deadline, many voices.

The window

The September 2025 alert went out with the October 1 fiscal year start days away. Budget advocacy is not a season. It is a sprint you have to already be warmed up for.

The outcome

The Senate version carried no such reduction. Conference kept it out. The final FY26 budget passed October 3, 2025 without the cut.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

☐ The bill number and the section number

☐ Your county and your legislative district

☐ One specific ask, stated as a verb

☐ A written version you can email after the call

☐ The dollar figure and where you got it

☐ One sentence on who in your family it hits

☐ The name of your provider agency

☐ The staffer's name so you can follow up

YOUR MOVE

Run this playbook the next time a number shows up

1

Read the actual bill section. Not the summary.

2

Call your own state representative's office first.

3

Then your state senator. Both chambers matter.

4

Contact the relevant appropriations subcommittee.

5

Submit written testimony, one page, with your ask.

6

If it survives conference, go to the governor's office.

Legislators do not remember stories about services. They remember constituents who could name the section number that was hurting them.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

thearcoakland.org · <https://www.thearcoakland.org/advocacy-initiatives/direct-care-worker/>

incompassmi.org · <https://incompassmi.org/>

dcwmichigan.org · <https://www.dcwmiichigan.org/>

legislature.mi.gov · <https://legislature.mi.gov/>

arcmi.org · <https://arcmi.org/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jim Palasty is the founder of OASIS for Autism and a single father of an adult autistic daughter in Michigan.

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