



Survival Coalition of Disability Organizations Concerned About Impacts of Legislature's Extraordinary Session bills on people with disabilities

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(MADISON) -- The Survival Coalition of more than 30 disability organizations is concerned about potential consequences of two bills the Republican State Legislature is fast-tracking today.

Specifically, AB1072 will create obstacles and increase the time it takes for the Department of Health Services to make changes and improvements in Medicaid and other programs that help people with disabilities, including Family Care, IRIS, Badgercare, MAPP, the children's waiver program, Katie Beckett, intensive autism services for children and more. The bill would make the process to make emergency changes to address crisis situations, updates required by the federal government or even simple changes to programs more difficult.

"Any bill that makes big changes like this to programs people rely on needs more discussion and should go through the health committees of the legislature," said Lisa Pugh, Survival Coalition co-chair. "These proposed change needs significant public input and more than one hearing."

"There is no way people with disabilities and others have time to understand these bills or to get to the capitol to testify on such short notice," said Beth Swedeen, Survival Coalition co-chair. "People with disabilities, their families, and their supporters care deeply about programs on which they rely, and want to weigh in whenever significant changes are made. This requires time and advance notice, as well as multiple modes in which they can participate."

"We also are concerned that another bill (AB 1071) would decrease participation of voters with disabilities in the electoral process, create confusion, and add to the difficulties and cost for Wisconsin's 1800 plus municipalities to administer the elections and to provide legally required support for voters with disabilities," said Kristin Kerschensteiner, Survival Coalition co-chair.

Survival Coalition members request that the Legislature slow down its process and discuss these bills with proper stakeholder input and expert analysis to address unintended consequences.