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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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IRRC

Secretary Ted Dallas
PA Department of Human Services
333 Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17110

January 17, 2017

Re: Changes to Pennsylvania's Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Program

Dear Secretary Dallas:

I am writing to convey the concerns of my constituents regarding changes to Pennsylvania's Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver program. Specifically, parents and caretakers of people with intellectual disabilities are concerned that community-based mandates will be detrimental to many disabled.

They are individuals; no two alike with their own unique abilities and challenges. My constituents and I worry that so quickly raising the bar to 75% may not meet the needs of our citizens. I ask that you review their concerns during the review process.

Sheltered programs provide full days of work in a safe, supervised environment. Workers with disabilities practice interacting with others, learn new skills, and assume responsibility for their work. Parents remark that their children take pride in earning a paycheck and feeling productive. Their work is steady, stable, and transportation is provided.

While parents and caretakers support community integration, I share their concern that not every person with intellectual disabilities is capable of functioning unsheltered in the community, or that they would benefit from the mandate. Without the option of a sheltered program, many cannot enter the community and will become isolated at home, their abilities regressing.

I understand that the proposed changes to HCBS requirements are intended to comply with federal regulations to ensure continued federal funding. I urge you to consider the concerns of my constituents—and many more across the state—when developing how Pennsylvania will comply with the federal mandate.

Thank you for your consideration on this critical, and time sensitive issue. If I can be of any assistance during the review process, please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Dean

Madeleine Dean
State Representative
153rd Legislative District