



Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania
1414 N. Cameron Street, Second Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17103-1049
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(877) 375-7139 (TDD)
www.drnpa.org

June 1, 2015

The Honorable Patrick M. Browne
Majority Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room 281 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable William F. Adolph, Jr.
Majority Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Room 245 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Vincent J. Hughes
Minority Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room 545 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Joseph F. Markosek
Minority Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Room 512E Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Transfer to Vocational Rehabilitation Fund Line Item, Department of Labor and Industry

Dear Appropriations Committees Chairs:

Advocates for Community Employment (ACE) is a statewide coalition of the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania that is led by people with disabilities. ACE promotes opportunities for employment in the community at or above the minimum wage for all people with disabilities. We are people with disabilities and organizations across Pennsylvania. We represent youth and adults with disabilities who are working in the community or who want to work in the community. We write to ask for your support of the Governor's budget proposal to increase Vocational Rehabilitation funding by \$5 million in state funds, which would maximize the funding available from the federal government.

Protecting and advancing the rights of people with disabilities

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Vocational Rehabilitation helps people with disabilities to identify and achieve meaningful careers. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) services are individualized to help people with disabilities to prepare for, start, or maintain employment. Vocational Rehabilitation includes assessments, supported employment, assistive technology for work, job coaching, technical assistance for employers, and other crucial services. Supported employment and customized employment services through OVR help people with the most significant disabilities to be competitively employed.

In fiscal year 2014, OVR served over 71,000 people with disabilities. This includes an investment of about \$6,200 a person to help over 8,200 people with disabilities to get jobs in the community at or above the minimum wage. Vocational Rehabilitation leads to more independence for people with disabilities and new income tax revenue for Pennsylvania.

The Governor has proposed an additional \$5 million in state funds for the Transfer to Vocational Rehabilitation Fund line item. State Vocational Rehabilitation funds receive a high match from the federal government. The additional \$5 million in state funds would enable Pennsylvania to draw down about \$18 million more in federal funding. This would maximize the federal Vocational Rehabilitation funding available to Pennsylvania.

OVR cannot serve all who seek its services. Maximizing our Vocational Rehabilitation funding would enable OVR to serve more people. Many more people with disabilities want to work in the community and earn a living wage. Many more people need services to maintain their employment. All need Vocational Rehabilitation services.

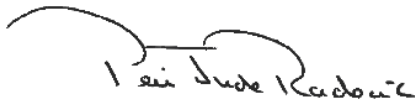
There are many success stories in Pennsylvania due to Vocational Rehabilitation, many in your own districts. Maximizing funding will lead to more success stories. Please ensure that Pennsylvania enacts a final budget for 2015-2016 that includes the additional \$5 million in state funds for the Transfer to Vocational Rehabilitation Fund line item.

Thank you for your support. If you need more information, please contact Chava Kintisch, Esquire, Director of Civic and Government Affairs, Disability

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Rights Network of Pennsylvania, at ckintisch@drnpa.org or 215-238-8070,
extension 210.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peri Jude Radecic". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "P".

Peri Jude Radecic, Chief Executive Officer
Jean Searle, Policy Advocate and Self Advocate
Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania

Ronald L. Delvisco
Leola, PA

Janet D. Fiore
Philadelphia, PA

Wilma Mack
Philadelphia, PA

Matt Stinner
Hershey, PA

Tanya Teglo
Edinboro, PA

Josie Badger, Campaign Manager
I Want to Work

Barbara A. Dively, Executive Director
Acquired Brain Injury Network of Pennsylvania

ADAPT Pennsylvania

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Disabled in Action of Pennsylvania

Celia S. Feinstein and Amy S. Goldman, Co-Executive Directors
Institute on Disabilities, Temple University

Amy C. Beck, Executive Director
Lehigh Valley Center For Independent Living (LVCIL)

Thomas H. Earle, Chief Executive Officer
Liberty Resources, Inc. Center for Independent Living

Hope Weichman, Acting Executive Director
Life and Independence for Today Center for Independent Living

Sue Walther, Executive Director
Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania

Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Christine Michaels, Executive Director
NAMI Southwestern Pennsylvania

National Multiple Sclerosis Society – Pennsylvania Chapters

Julia Barol, President
PA APSE (Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst)

John Horst, Executive Director
PA Council of the Blind

Lynn Keltz, Executive Director
PA Mental Health Consumers' Association

Matthew Seeley, Esquire, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council

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Jennifer Clark, Executive Director
Julie Foster, Staff Attorney
Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia

Oscar Drummond, President
Self Advocates United as 1

Debbie Robinson, Executive Director
Speaking for Ourselves

Bill Krebs, Executive Director
TRAPS Self-Advocacy

Maureen Devaney and Audrey Coccia, Executive Directors
Vision for Equality, Inc.

cc: Senate Appropriations Committee members and staff
House Appropriations Committee members and staff
Senate Labor and Industry Committee Chairs and staff
House Labor and Industry Committee Chairs and staff
Honorable Tom Wolf