




Senate of Pennsylvania

Senator LeAnna M. Washington

4th Senatorial District

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 14, 2010
To: All Senators
From: Senator LeAnna M. Washington 
Subject: Co-sponsorship request - **SSI Benefits For Disabled Foster Care Children "Aging Out"**

I will reintroduce SB 1184, a bill that will require the Department of Public Welfare to assess every child that is adjudicated dependent for eligibility for Title II and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, a process commonly known as "SSI Advocacy." In an effort to address concerns about the lack of support and resources children in foster care face when they age out of the foster care system, my legislation will require every child to be screened for Title II benefits and SSI when they enter state custody and within six months of aging out of state custody. Children can receive SSI benefits if they are determined blind or disabled. To be eligible, a child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that very seriously limits his or her activities and the condition must be expected to last at least one year or it must be expected to result in death. SSI is a Social Security Administration program that provides monthly cash payments to people who have limited income and limited resources and are determined disabled.

When children are in the custody of the state, payments for Title II and SSI benefits will go to the state as long as the child remains eligible and remains in state custody. When the child ages out of state custody, those

benefits go directly to the child, providing some measure of continuity of resource for a child who may typically be without any. There are approximately 16,000 children in foster care in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Typically, 10-15% are likely to be found eligible for SSI. That means at least 1,600 children would be eligible for SSI. Based on the SSI amount of \$674, this would translate into a monthly revenue of \$1,078,400 or yearly revenue of \$12,940,800. Based on national averages, at least 5% (800) of the foster care population would also be Title II eligible.

To indicate your interest in co-sponsoring this important legislation, please contact Cindie Watkins in my office by calling 7-1427 or emailing cwatkins@pasenate.com.