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MEMORANDUM

To: All House Representatives

From: Representative Jaret Gibbons

Re: Permit Family Relative or Legal Guardian of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities to Provide Unlicensed Residential Habilitation Waiver Services

Date: January 13, 2012

In the near future, I will introduce legislation amending the Public Welfare Code to permit family relatives or legal guardians of an individual with intellectual disabilities to be reimbursed for providing Unlicensed Residential Habilitation waiver services through the Department of Public Welfare (DPW).

Currently, DPW does not permit a family relative or legal guardian of an individual with intellectual disabilities to be paid for providing Unlicensed Residential Habilitation waiver services in either the family relative or legal guardian's private home or that of the individual with intellectual disabilities. This is disheartening in light of the fact that the state of Virginia permits this exception under certain circumstances because it recognizes the significant role family relatives and legal guardians serve by providing around-the-clock care for their loved one.

The Commonwealth currently provides reimbursement for services and supplies to qualified family caregivers of functionally dependent adults and those with chronic dementia. I believe that DPW should expand its scope by reimbursing the relatives and guardians who provide similar care, often at great personal sacrifice, for their loved one with intellectual disabilities. If my legislation is enacted, family relatives and legal guardians would be compensated for assisting with day-to-day tasks such as transportation needs, eating, bathing, and household chores as well as assisting in the development and enhancement of motor and socialization skills.

For the reasons mentioned above, Pennsylvania should join Virginia in its decision to permit a family relative or legal guardian of an individual with intellectual disabilities to provide Unlicensed Residential Habilitation waiver services. I sincerely hope you will join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation.

If you wish to be added as a co-sponsor, please contact Susan Finger at 705-2060 or email sfinger@pahouse.net. Thank you.