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TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Randy Vulakovich

DATE: May 7, 2012

I soon will introduce legislation to make Allegheny County eligible to apply for funding for the Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Program, which provides reduced-fare shared-ride transit service beyond the ADA-mandated three-quarter mile service area for individuals who have a disability and who are between the ages of 18 and 64. Currently, Allegheny County is the only county in the Commonwealth which does not receive PwD funding.

When the PwD Program was instituted in Pennsylvania in 2001, the Port Authority of Allegheny County already was providing and subsidizing its ACCESS service well beyond the three-quarter mile ADA-mandated service area and serving all of Allegheny County. As a result, Allegheny County was not included in the PwD Program at its inception.

Today, the Port Authority's cost to provide its ACCESS service is estimated at \$2.5 million per year. If the Port Authority's planned service reductions are implemented in September, the cost will climb to roughly \$5 million. Given the Port Authority's projected \$64 million deficit, I am seriously concerned that the future of ACCESS is in jeopardy, with cuts to the service or elimination of the service a distinct possibility.

In order to prevent that and to preserve reliable paratransit service to people with disabilities who live in Allegheny County, I am sponsoring this legislation that makes Allegheny County eligible to apply for available PwD funding. This would enable eligible individuals' fares to be subsidized by the PwD Program rather than by the Port Authority. The PwD Program is administered by PennDOT and funded through the budget line item for "Programs of Statewide Significance."

My legislation simply creates a level playing field, helping to ensure that Allegheny County continues to provide the same level of paratransit service that other counties provide across the Commonwealth.

I ask you to consider cosponsoring this legislation. If you would like to sign on as a cosponsor, please contact Pat Geiger in my Harrisburg office by phone, (717) 260-6407, or by email, pgeiger@pahousegop.com.