

Good Morning Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you this morning regarding a major concern of the intellectual disability community surrounding appropriated funds in the Pennsylvania 2016/2017 fiscal year budget to serve 250 people on the emergency waiting list and 700 graduates from special education. Although the funding allocated in the budget is far less than what is needed to significantly address the waiting list, these appropriations are critical to the individuals and their families currently living without the supports and services they so desperately need.

I first became aware of the Department of Human Services intent to divert these appropriated funds to other expenditures on August 30, 2016 while meeting with the Co-Executive Directors at Visions for Equality, an advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities located in Philadelphia and similar to The Arc of Delaware County. Through Vision for Equality the Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign was established in 1997 in response to the outcry of people in crisis across the Commonwealth and over the last 18 years the Waiting List Campaign has been educating families, government officials, the public and legislators about the impact of waiting lists on the health, safety and welfare of people with intellectual disabilities. It was not long after learning of the Department of Human Services intent from Visions for Equality that The Arc of Delaware County began receiving calls from families on the waiting list as they also became aware of the Department's intent and over the last several weeks we have had to tell these families that we do not have an answer to their question of "what happened". In response to the wave of concern and despair voiced by the families of some of our most vulnerable citizens, The Arc of Delaware County, along with other advocacy organizations such as Vision for Equality have undertaken the task of answering that critical question of "what happened". Both myself and a representative of The Arc of Delaware County's Legislative Committee and former President of the Board of Directors of The Arc of Delaware County, Mr. Robert Prince had the opportunity to meet with representative Adolph in pursuit of an answer. Representative Adolph was open to the concerns of our families and confirmed for us what is reflected on page 4 of the House

Appropriations Committee Summary of the Bipartisan 2016/17 House Budget Proposal, page 22 of Representative Markosek's 2016/17 General Fund Budget Overview of Revenue and Expenditures, and page 21 of the 2016-17 Governor's Executive Budget, it was clear to the intellectual disability community that although funding was not at or near the levels needed, funding was clearly appropriated to address the waiting list. It is very concerning to us that the Department of Human Services would arbitrarily reverse and/or divert appropriated funds allocated to serve individuals and families who so desperately need the supports and services to remain living in their homes and communities and the graduates from special education which is where the waiting list usually begins for most people. In our own County of Delaware, there are currently 427 individuals on the waiting list. Of those 427 individuals 118 are in emergency situations and 148 are children of elderly parents.

Our legislators voted in favor of the current 31.5 billion dollar budget based on many of the identified line items contained in the budget and the move away by the Department of Human Services from fulfilling the obligation of addressing these identified areas of need is wrong. We have been told that the Department's decision is based on higher than anticipated cost increases for the people currently being served which we feel is a very blanket statement when altering such a critical need. To my knowledge there has not been an increase in provider rates in some time and we are struggling to identify with the "increased cost" notion to rationalize this grave injustice. It is of significant concern as well that in addition to the direct detrimental effect this funds diversion will have on individuals in need of service, such an action breeds a murky, un-dependable and unassured environment, leading to the lack of trust, hope and faith between constituents and their legislators, to whom we look to protect our rights and fight for our needs.

It is our hope that today's proceedings will uncover the clear disconnect between the intended use of appropriated funds to address the waiting list in the 2016-17 budget and the Department of Human Services plan to utilize those funds for anything other than their intended purpose. The intellectual disability community appeals to the legislator and the Department of Human Services to reinstate these funds for the intended purpose and deliver needed services to the 250

people on the Pennsylvania Emergency waiting list and the 700 graduates of special education.

Thank you.