
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 215 Session of
2002

INTRODUCED BY GERLACH, STACK, ERICKSON, LOGAN, KITCHEN, DENT,
CONTI, O'PAKE, MUSTO, KUKOVICH, THOMPSON, TOMLINSON, COSTA,
WAGNER, HOLL, GREENLEAF, PUNT, TARTAGLIONE, LEMMOND,
D. WHITE, WAUGH, BOSCOLA, SCARNATI, BELL, SCHWARTZ,
C. WILLIAMS, BODACK, MELLOW AND EARLL, APRIL 24, 2002

REFERRED TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE, APRIL 24, 2002

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the Governor to support maintenance of the current
2 eligibility rules for medical assistance for children with
3 disabilities including the disregard of parental income.

4 WHEREAS, Medical assistance currently funds critical services
5 for children with disabilities such as in-home nursing,
6 prescriptions, nutritional supplements, medical equipment
7 (wheelchairs, hearing aids and lifts), supplies (diapers and
8 underpads) and behavioral supports such as wraparound (TSS) and
9 residential treatment facilities; and

10 WHEREAS, Parental income is not currently counted in
11 determining eligibility for medical assistance if a child is
12 determined to have a severe disability; and

13 WHEREAS, The Governor's Executive Budget proposes to count
14 parental income in determining eligibility for medical
15 assistance; and

16 WHEREAS, The services currently being funded by medical
17 assistance are often not covered by commercial health insurance

1 or, if covered, the coverage is often limited by annual and
2 lifetime caps; and

3 WHEREAS, Coverage of these services can often make the
4 difference between maintaining the child at home with his family
5 or sending the child to an institution; and

6 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth, through the medical assistance
7 program, bears the costs of care for a child who is
8 institutionalized for more than one month; and

9 WHEREAS, The Governor's proposal would not take into
10 consideration the amount spend by families of children with
11 disabilities on their care; and

12 WHEREAS, There are a limited number of medical assistance
13 waiver slots under which children with severe disabilities would
14 still, under the Governor's proposal, be able to maintain
15 medical assistance regardless of parental income; and

16 WHEREAS, Placing a cap on parental income for purposes of
17 medical assistance eligibility for children with severe
18 disabilities will discourage parents of such children from
19 taking better-paying jobs or expanding their businesses, which
20 may result in a loss of tax revenues to the Commonwealth; and

21 WHEREAS, School districts that participate in the Access
22 Program are likely to lose some Federal funding for special
23 education as a result of the Governor's proposal as the amount
24 of Federal funding under the Access Program is linked to the
25 number of children in special education that have medical
26 assistance; and

27 WHEREAS, County mental health programs rely heavily on
28 medical assistance to provide funding for services for children
29 with behavioral disabilities, so loss of medical assistance for
30 some children will place additional fiscal pressure on already

1 limited State and county mental health funds; and

2 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare lacks essential
3 data regarding the number of children who would be affected by
4 the Governor's proposed cap on parental income, the amount and
5 cost of services these children are currently receiving, the
6 potential impact on parents and the potential impact on school
7 districts and county mental health/mental retardation agencies;
8 therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That the Senate memorialize the Governor to support
10 maintenance of the current eligibility rules for medical
11 assistance for children with disabilities including the
12 disregard of parental income.