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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 531 Session of  
2019

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INTRODUCED BY MURT, HILL-EVANS, KORTZ, DIGIROLAMO, SCHMITT,  
KINSEY, LONGIETTI, BURNS, RYAN, BIZZARRO, MILLARD,  
HOHENSTEIN, FREEMAN, YOUNGBLOOD, CALTAGIRONE, KIM, READSHAW,  
MALAGARI, JOHNSON-HARRELL AND BROWN, SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of October 2019 as "Lifesharing Awareness  
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Approximately 1,600 individuals with intellectual  
4 disabilities receive lifesharing services in this Commonwealth  
5 each year; and

6 WHEREAS, Lifesharing involves having an individual with an  
7 intellectual disability share his or her life with supportive  
8 people who form a caring household; and

9 WHEREAS, Lifesharing may happen in a provider's home or the  
10 home of the individual with an intellectual disability, and  
11 lifesharing may be offered by a couple, a single person or a  
12 family; and

13 WHEREAS, The purpose of lifesharing is to enrich the lives of  
14 individuals with intellectual disabilities by matching them with  
15 an individual or a family who has chosen to open their home and  
16 hearts; and

17 WHEREAS, Lifesharing is a mutual experience, not a

1 hierarchical one; and

2 WHEREAS, Lifesharing provides a place to live for individuals  
3 with intellectual disabilities in which they can develop close  
4 and committed personal relationships; and

5 WHEREAS, Lifesharing, formerly known as Family Living, has  
6 been provided in this Commonwealth for more than 30 years; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1982, a pilot lifesharing program officially  
8 began with Threshold Rehabilitation Services, Inc., an agency  
9 located in Reading; and

10 WHEREAS, Lifesharing became a viable living arrangement for  
11 individuals with intellectual disabilities; and

12 WHEREAS, By 1997, lifesharing was available in every county  
13 in this Commonwealth; and

14 WHEREAS, Individuals with intellectual disabilities who live  
15 with foster parents through children and youth services are able  
16 to continue living in those homes through lifesharing when they  
17 reach 21 years of age in order to provide consistency and  
18 continuity of care; and

19 WHEREAS, Data comparison from a Statewide independent  
20 monitoring of residential services from 2007 through 2010  
21 indicates that lifesharing participants consistently had the  
22 highest level of consumer satisfaction with where they live; and

23 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has a significant waiting list for  
24 individuals with intellectual disabilities requesting  
25 residential services due to the aging of caregivers and an aging  
26 population in need of support; and

27 WHEREAS, Current models of support, such as intermediate care  
28 facilities similar to institutions and home-based and community-  
29 based services, require 24-hour staffing and may be  
30 unsustainable; and

1 WHEREAS, Lifesharing costs less than both of these models  
2 while providing more individualized support; and

3 WHEREAS, An average lifesharing budget is approximately  
4 \$45,000 per year compared to a community or group home budget of  
5 approximately \$150,000 per year; and

6 WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau's  
7 statistics in 2005, by the year 2030, the number of caregivers  
8 available to care for nearly 75 million individuals 65 years of  
9 age or older will be vastly insufficient; and

10 WHEREAS, Our workforce cannot keep pace with the demand, so  
11 there will not be enough workers to care for the baby boomers;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Lifesharing may be an option for many of these  
14 individuals; and

15 WHEREAS, Lifesharing affords individuals with intellectual  
16 disabilities opportunities for increased community  
17 participation, potential for long-term relationships and the  
18 ability to assume new social roles; and

19 WHEREAS, Lifesharing providers are advocates, friends and  
20 mentors who share their homes with individuals with intellectual  
21 disabilities and help them engage in community life, learn new  
22 skills and make friends and good life choices that lead to  
23 satisfying, safe and productive lives; and

24 WHEREAS, It is important to educate the public about  
25 lifesharing and ensure that individuals with intellectual  
26 disabilities are provided with information so that they may  
27 choose lifesharing as a viable living arrangement; therefore be  
28 it

29 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
30 month of October 2019 as "Lifesharing Awareness Month" in

1 Pennsylvania.