

Legislation Text

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Urging Governor Rendell to create the Pennsylvania Consumer Workforce Council.

WHEREAS, In the June 10th *Philadelphia Weekly* cover story entitled “Not Home Alone,” Pennsylvania ranks as the country’s third oldest state and, in 2008, 15% of the population was 65 or older. According to PA Secretary of Labor and Industry Sandi Vito, Pennsylvania will require 30,000 new home care workers by 2016 and by 2025 the number of disabled elderly in Pennsylvania is projected to increase between 27% to 41%.

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania spends \$2.9 billion per on nursing home care and only \$750 million in home and community health care for seniors and people with disabilities and health care costs in nursing homes is three times more expensive than home health care. In Philadelphia, 12,000 seniors receive taxpayer support for long term health care and only 40% receive home health care as opposed to nursing homes, yet 92% would prefer home health care; and

WHEREAS, Long term health care cannot be shifted from nursing homes to people’s homes without addressing the problems of home health care workers and caregivers. These caregivers receive no health insurance, sick days, or vacation and turnover is over 50% and only 40% of current home health workers have a year or more experience; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania spends an estimated \$22 million per year on turnover in the homecare workforce and caregiver turnover undermines the quality of services for consumers of home health care and when home health care workers leave their jobs, consumers are forced to start all over again with someone new, or worse, they are simply left without care; and

WHEREAS, In comparison to California, Oregon, Washington, and Massachusetts, a Pennsylvania Consumer Workforce Council would address the problems of home health care and save taxpayer dollars by shifting long term health care from nursing homes to people’s homes by allowing people to take full advantage of the “consumer-directed model,” where they hire and manage their own caregivers at a rate 20% below other health care providers; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Consumer Workforce Council is a board of seniors and people with disabilities who protect people’s rights to hire and manage their own home caregivers and gives caregivers access to group health insurance, peer mentoring, and training while empowering caregivers to advocate collectively for living wages and needed benefits. The Pennsylvania Consumer Workforce Council creates a registry of caregivers so that people can find a caregiver or back up when their regular worker is not available and helps to rebuild our neighborhoods as places where seniors, caregivers, and people with disabilities can live with dignity; and

WHEREAS, The Consumer Workforce Council was designed by and endorsed by Pennsylvania’s largest and most respected senior and disability advocacy organizations, providers, and health care workers’ unions and is supported by a diverse group of organizations including but not limited to 11199C NUHHCE (AFSCME/AFL-CIO), AARP of Pennsylvania, Action Alliance of Senior Citizens, Allegheny County Labor Council of Retirees, AM Vets, Centers for Independent Living of Central and North Central Pennsylvania,

Consumers' Union, Disabled in Action Pennsylvania, Liberty Resources (Center of Independent Living, Philadelphia), Pennsylvania and Philadelphia ADAPT, Pennsylvania Association of Retired Americans, Pennsylvania Council of Churches, and SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the Consumer Workforce Council is also supported by Senators Lisa Boscola and LeAnna Washington, House Speaker Keith McCall and House Majority Whip Bill DeWeese and 21 other members of the House of Representatives, and Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato and the Commissioners of Beaver and Lawrence Counties; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby support the Pennsylvania Consumer Workforce Council and urge Governor Rendell to create this body.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be submitted to Governor Rendell and the Majority and Minority leadership of both houses of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.