

# A Communication from the Policy Information Exchange

# Slice of Pie

A *Slice of Pie* is an ongoing publication keeping our readers informed about important public policy issues. It is the mission of the Policy Information Exchange to **educate and inform Pennsylvanians with disabilities, their families and advocates, and the general public, regarding public policy issues and to further the exchange of policy information between the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council and federal, state and local policy makers.**

*This project (program, publications, etc.) is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council; in part by grant number 1901PASCDD-02 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.*

## State News

### PA State Budget

As of July 26th, there is currently a budget impasse. On June 30th, the budget for fiscal year 2023-2023 was due from the state. The budget bill, HB 611 has passed in both the House of Representatives and Senate and now needs to be signed by Lt. Governor Austin Davis before being sent to Governor Shapiro. However, Lt. Governor Davis cannot sign the bill if the Senate is not in session. The Senate is not scheduled for a session day until Monday, September 18th. This means that the budget is on hold until the Senate reconvenes.

The budget outlines an approved \$45.5 billion for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Although the budget impasse continues to persist, we are able to provide a list of the appropriations, and the change from the fiscal year 2022-2023 available funds.

The proposed budget is available here:

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&sessYr=2023&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=B&billNbr=0611&pn=1811>

A budget impasse Q&A was released by the Office of the Budget which can be found here:

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Public-Info-Budget-Impasse-QA-FYE-6-30-24.pdf>

### Department of Human Services:

- **ID State Centers:**

\$100,327,000, a decrease of \$10,783,000 (or 9.70% decrease) from FY 22-23.

- **ICF/ID:**

\$166,354,000, an increase of \$14,462,000 (or 9.52% increase) from FY 22-23.

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- **Intellectual Disability (Community Base):**  
\$154,025,000, an increase of \$7,899,000 (or 5.41% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Intellectual Disability (Community Waiver):**  
\$2,323,369,000, an increase of \$211,227,000 (or 10% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Autism Intervention and Services:**  
\$31,679,000, an increase of \$2,304,000 (or 7.84% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Early Intervention (Birth to 3):**  
\$185,541,000, an increase of \$14,993,000 (or 8.79% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Mental Health Services:**  
\$885,567,000, an increase of \$19,474,000 (or 2.25% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Community Health Choices:**  
\$5,388,889,000, an increase of \$1,040,986,000 (or 23.94% increase) from FY 22-23.

**Department of Education:**

- **Special Education:**  
\$1,383,815,000, an increase of \$50,000,000 (or 3.74% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Early Intervention (3-5):**  
\$356,895,000, an increase of \$10,395,000 (or 3.0% increase) from FY 22-23.

**Department of Labor and Industry:**

- **Assistive Technology Demonstration and Training:**  
\$850,000, an increase of \$400,000 (or 88.9% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Assistive Technology Devices:**  
\$1,000,000, an increase of \$250,000 (or 33.3% increase) from FY 22-23.
- **Centers for Independent Living:**

\$2,634,000, an increase of \$484,000 (or 22.5% increase) from FY 22-23.

- **OVR State Match/Transfer to Vocational Rehabilitation:**

\$47,942,000, which was level funded at FY 22-23.

- **Supported Employment:**

\$397,000, which was level funded at FY 22-23.

**Department of Treasury:**

- **PA ABLE:**

\$900,000, which was level funded at FY 22-23.

**Department of Health:**

- **Services for Children with Special Needs:**

\$1,728,000, which was level funded at FY 22-23.

**PA Department of Health Releases State Health Improvement Plan**

The Pennsylvania State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is a multi-year plan developed by the PA DOH in collaboration with the Healthy Pennsylvania Partnership (HPP), a multi-sector partnership of stakeholders and collaborations. The SHIP has a large focus on health equity, or providing everyone a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential. People with disabilities experience unique health disparities which need to be addressed at the State level in order to help mitigate the effects.

Read SHIP Here:

**<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/OpEx/Pages/State-Health-Improvement-Plan.aspx>**

**PA Primary Election Results**

On May 16th, Pennsylvania held its Primary Election.

Key Results:

There were two special elections that occurred on May 16th, one in District 108 which services parts of Northumberland and Montour counties and District 163 which services part of Delaware

Go to our digital version of Slice at <https://www.paddc.org/publications/slice-of-pie/> to access the links.

County. Heather Boyd (Democrat) won her seat in Delaware county and Michael Stender (Republican) won his seat in Northumberland and Montour counties. This held the Democratic majority in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

## **PA Special Election – September 2023**

Representative Sara Innamorato (D- Allegheny) has resigned her House of Representatives seat. The state House will now be at a 101-101 tie. Speaker McClinton announced that a special election will take place on Tuesday, September 19th to fill the vacant seat.

More information about the resignation and proceeding election can be found here:

**<https://www.spotlightpa.org/news/2023/07/pennsylvania-state-house-innamorato-resign-majority-democrats/>**

## **ODP Announces Details On Selective Contracting**

ODP intends to change the way providers are enrolled, qualified, and paid to deliver the following services through selective contracting:

- Residential Habilitation, Supported Living, and Life Sharing in the Consolidated and Community Living Waivers
- Supports Coordination in the Consolidated, Community Living, and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waivers
- Targeted Support Management in the Medicaid State Plan

Selective Contracting allows ODP to improve the quality of these services by:

- Moving beyond contracting with any willing and qualified provider and instead requiring providers to meet specific criteria set by ODP.
- Developing a class of “preferred providers” using new performance standards that align with Everyday Lives.

- Aligning payment with outcomes.

Learn More Here:

**<https://www.paproviders.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ODPANN-23-042-Open-for-Public-Comment-Concept-Paper-on-Selective-Contracting-for-Residential-and-Supports-Coordination-Services.pdf>**

## **Resource Guide for Supporting Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Individuals**

“This guide offers resources in one central location for those who support or care for someone who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind and receives supports from the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Development of this guide included input from individuals within the Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, and hearing communities.”

**[https://palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Communications/ODP/2022/Recourse+Publication+June+2023+5.4.23+\(Deaf+Services+Handbook\)+TAGGED+\(002\).pdf](https://palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Communications/ODP/2022/Recourse+Publication+June+2023+5.4.23+(Deaf+Services+Handbook)+TAGGED+(002).pdf)**

## **ODP Releases Gold Book**

“ODP is pleased to release the third version of The Gold Book to our stakeholders. This version of the Gold Book will be available online and will be continuously growing and changing. As information and policies are updated, updates will be made to The Gold Book to keep the information current and relevant.”

**[https://palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/MyODP\\_Content/Gold+Book/Gold+Book.pdf](https://palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/MyODP_Content/Gold+Book/Gold+Book.pdf)**

# **Bills of Interest**

Below we summarize some bills of interest to the disability community from the 2023-2024 Session. For more information about these bills or any other state legislative activity, go to **<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>**.

Go to our digital version of Slice at <https://www.paddc.org/publications/slice-of-pie/> to access the links.

**HB 301.** Introduced by Representative Patrick J. Harkins (D-Erie). This bill would remove **derogatory terms/language** from the PA School Code. Referred to Education, March 10, 2023. Third consideration and Final Passage, April 26, 2023. Referred to Senate Education, May 3, 2023. Re-referred to Senate Appropriations, June 7, 2023.

Impact: Would remove the use of derogatory terms and language in the PA School Code.

**HB 342.** Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for **students with disabilities** at institutions of higher education. Referred to Human Services, March 13, 2023.

Impact: Would improve the transition to post-secondary schools for students with disabilities by incorporating parts of Senator Bob Casey's federal RISE (Respond, Innovate, Succeed and Empower) Act.

**HB 348.** Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would adopt a **streamlined hiring and promotion process** for qualified individuals with significant disabilities whose physical or mental impairments impact their ability to participate in the competitive hiring and promotion process. Referred to Labor and Industry, March 13, 2023.

Impact: Would amend Part III of Title 71 of the Pennsylvania Code (Civil Service Reform), an appointing authority may noncompetitively appoint an individual with a significant disability to a temporary position when it is necessary to observe an applicant on the job to establish that the applicant is able or ready to perform the duties of the position (trial work period).

**HB 409.** Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would establish a mental health care services clearinghouse. This clearinghouse will serve as a publicly **accessible registry of mental health care resources** available across the Commonwealth and will accordingly assist school personnel in connecting families to community mental health resources. Referred to Human Services, March 14, 2023. Final passage, May 23, 2023. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, June 2, 2023.

Impact: Streamlines and makes a publicly accessible site for information on mental health care services that are available in Pennsylvania. This clearinghouse would increase coordination efforts among schools, communities, and mental health providers.

**HB 500.** Introduced by Representative Brandon J. Markosek (D-Allegheny). This bill would require the Department of State to provide special **absentee ballots printed in braille** to qualified voters who submit a written request for a special ballot. Referred to State Government, March 17, 2023.

Impact: Provides absentee ballots printed in braille.

**HB 503.** Introduced by Representative Nancy Guent (D-Montgomery). This bill would protect all Pennsylvanians **against discrimination** and provide equal opportunity, regardless of marital status or family caregiver status in employment, housing and public accommodation. Referred to State Government, March 17, 2023. Re-committed to Rules, June 28, 2023.

Impact: Prohibits hiring discrimination against caregivers.

**HB 537.** Introduced by Representative Ann Flood (R-Northampton). This will would require the Departments of Health, Human Services, and Aging to communicate on a regular basis to ensure that any reports of **elder abuse** which are made to any agency listed are placed in the correct location to be properly investigated. Referred to Aging and Older Adults Services, March 20, 2023.

Impact: Streamline the process of investigating elder abuse.

**HB 611.** Introduced by Representative Jordan A. Harris (D-Philadelphia). **Budget bill** for the fiscal year July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. Referred to Appropriations, May 2, 2023. Final passage June 5, 2023. Referred to Senate Appropriations, June 6, 2023. Passed June 30, 2023. Referred to House Rules June 30, 2023. Signed in House, July 5, 2023.

Impact: 2023-2024 fiscal year budget bill, explained above.

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**HB 661.** Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for **intellectual disability and autism** fee schedule rates. Referred to Human Services, March 21, 2023.

Impact: Would amend the Human Services Code requiring that rates for Direct Support Professionals annually be set based on a national market consumer index.

**HB 705.** Introduced by Representative Malcolm Kenyatta (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for definitions, for eligibility and for the **medically needy** and determination of eligibility. Referred to Human Services, March 27, 2023.

Impact: Would provide emergency relief to those who previously received support through General Assistance (GA).

**HB 715.** Introduced by Representative Carol Kazeem (D-Delaware). This bill would enhance oversight of **personal care homes**. Referred to Human Services, March 27, 2023.

Impact: Require unannounced inspections of personal care homes with three or fewer residents.

**HB 806.** Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would improve access to **Voting** for people with disabilities. Referred to State Government, April 3, 2023.

Impact: Increase accessibility of voting by allowing ballots to be brought outside.

**HB 808.** Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would require that Pennsylvanians deemed eligible for the HCBS waiver program receive their **HCBS waiver** benefits no later than 90 days after eligibility for Medicaid. Referred to Human Services, April 3, 2023.

Impact: End the waitlist for HCBS to ensure that people receive a waiver 90 days after eligibility.

**HB 849.** Introduced by Representative Michael H. Schlossberg (D-Lehigh). This bill would provide for **adult mental health** Program funding. Referred to Human Services, April 10, 2023. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, June 14, 2023. Also, see **SB 605**.

Impact: Would allocate funds to mental health services and workforce development.

**HB 844.** Introduced by Representative Ed Neilson (D-Philadelphia). This bill would establish the Long-Term Services and Supports Commission, the Long-Term Services and Supports Council and the **Long-Term Services and Supports** Trust Fund, imposing duties on the Department of Human Services and the Department of Revenue and imposing a payroll premium. Referred to Human Services, April 10, 2023.

Impact: Established a fund to provide up to \$36,500 in lifetime benefits to eligible beneficiaries for long term care services, such as respite care, in-home caregiving, time in a nursing home/assisted living facility, or home modifications.

**HB 876.** Introduced by Representative Mike Cabell (R-Luzerne). This bill would require any provider which seeks to operate in the Medicaid program use either an NPI or register for SPI. The Department of Human Services would be required to establish a **standardized program** for any company which lacks an NPI and must register for provider identification with the state. Referred to Human Services April 10, 2023. Re-committed to Rules, July 5, 2023.

Impact: Would require providers to register for provider identification with the state.

**HB 1100.** Introduced by Representative Steve Samuelson (D-Northampton). This bill would raise the income limit for **senior tax/rent rebate**. Referred to Finance May 3, 2023. Signed in House, July 5, 2023.

Impact: Would increase income limits for the Property Tax / Rent Rebate Program.

**HB 1104.** Introduced by Representative Tarik Khan (D-Philadelphia). This bill would prohibit the charging of admission **fees** for events for personal care attendants of persons with disabilities; and imposing penalties. Referred to Human Services, May 5, 2023. Referred to Tourism and Economic and Recreational Development, June 22, 2023. Also, see **SB 735**.

Impact: Require waived admission fees for personal care attendants of people with disabilities.

**HB 1184.** Introduced by Representative Patty

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Kim (D-Dauphin). This bill would extend the **PACE/PACENET** COLA moratorium to December 31, 2025, allowing thousands of older Pennsylvanians to retain the benefit of PACE and PACENET. Referred to Aging and Older Adults Services, May 18, 2023. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth June 26, 2023. Also, see **SB 607**.

Impact: Would benefit nearly 29,400 seniors in PA by extending the prescription drug assistance programs for seniors to 2025 instead of 2023.

**HB 1214**. Introduced by Representative Tarah Probst (D-Munroe). This bill would direct a school entity to determine whether a child is a **child with a disability** under Federal law. Referred to Education, May 22, 2023.

Impact: Require schools to do an initial evaluation to determine whether a child has a disability.

**HB 1218**. Introduced by Representative Melissa Cerrato (D-Montgomery). This bill would provide for payments for **spousal personal care services**. Referred to Human Services, May 24, 2023. Third consideration and final passage, July 7, 2023. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, July 17, 2023.

Impact: Would establish a program to allow spouse caregivers to receive payments.

**HB 1294**. Introduced by Representative Ismail Smith-Wade-El (D-Lancaster). This bill would create The **Commonwealth Housing Council** to develop a uniform housing strategy. Referred to Housing and Community Development, June 1, 2023. Also, see **SB 376**.

Impact: Create a Commonwealth Housing Council to develop housing goals, benchmarks, and priorities.

**HB 1300**. Introduced by Representative Thomas L. Mehaffie (R-Dauphin). This bill would add the **Long-Term Care Ombudsman** to the Long-Term Care Council. Referred to Aging and Adult Services, May 20, 2023. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth, June 25, 2023. Re-referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee, June 28, 2023.

Impact: By adding a Long-Term Care Ombudsman

to the Long-Term Care Council, this would allow for stronger advocacy of the older adult community.

**HB 1305**. Introduced by Representative Stephen Kinsey (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for **behavioral health crisis** intervention; and establishing the 988 Fund. Referred to Human Services, June 2, 2023. Referred to Health and Human Services, June 29, 2023.

Impact: Establish funding for PA's 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

**HB 1397**. Introduced by Representative Darisha K. Parker (D-Philadelphia). This bill would strengthen Pennsylvania's **Guardianship Law**. Referred to Judiciary, June 13, 2023.

Impact: Help prevent fraud, abuse, and exploitation in PA's guardianship system.

**HB 1421**. Introduced by Representative Benjamin V. Sanchez (D-Montgomery). This bill would allow an individual on the **autism spectrum** to receive notation on their **driver's license** or identification card indicating their condition. This notation will alert emergency responders to the individual's condition and allow them to interact with the person in a more appropriate fashion. This bill will also establish an account to which individuals applying for a driver's license or identification card may give a voluntary \$3 contribution. These funds will be used in providing education and training to working professionals who interact with individuals on the autism spectrum. Referred to Transportation, June 15, 2023.

Impact: Would allow individuals with autism to receive a notation on their driver's license or identification indicating their autism diagnosis.

**HB 1495**. Introduced by Representative Paul Friel (D-Chester). This bill would provide for **special education in charter schools**. Referred to Education, June 22, 2023.

Impact: This would change the funding of charter schools to be determined.

**HB 1527**. Introduced by Representative Benjamin V. Sanchez (D-Montgomery). This bill would increase the **Personal Needs Allowance** deduction for medical assistance-eligible persons in nursing facilities. Referred to Aging and Adult Services, June 27, 2023.

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Impact: Increase the personal needs allowance deduction from \$45 per month to \$60 per month for Medical Assistance eligible residents living in nursing facilities.

**HB 1537.** Introduced by Representative Barbara Gleim (R-Cumberland). This bill would increase the age of minor consent to treat for medical, dental and mental health from 14 years of age to 16 years of age. In addition, the legislation would also have an exemption for special need individuals who may not be capable of making important medical decisions on their own without parental guidance. Referred to Health, June 28, 2023.

Impact: Increase the age of minor consent from 14 to 16 years old, with an exemption for children with disabilities.

**HB 1545.** Introduced by Representative Joe Hogan (R-Bucks). This bill would create the **digital mental health services** pilot program in the Department of Education (PDE). Referred to Education, June 29, 2023.

Impact: Requires the Department of Education to create a digital mental health services pilot program in which 50 schools could participate in the program.

**SB 119.** Introduced by Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York). This bill would integrate **behavioral health and physical health services** in Pennsylvania's Medicaid program, HealthChoices. Referred to Health and Human Services, January 18, 2023.

Impact: Would coordinate mental health, substance abuse and primary care services in an effort to produce the best outcomes and best care for people with complex health needs.

**SB 376.** Introduced by Senator Vincent J. Hughes (D-Montgomery). This bill would establish **Commonwealth Housing Council**. Referred to Urban Affairs and Housing, February 16, 2023. Also, see HB 1294.

Impact: Establish a Commonwealth Housing Council to develop housing goals and create a resource guide.

**SB 401.** Introduced by Senator Wayne D. Fontana (D-Allegheny). This bill would change Pennsylvania's **voting system** so that all elections would

be conducted entirely by mail. It would also plan to add a provision that would require ballot drop boxes be placed in every municipality building. Referred to State Government, March 15, 2023.

Impact: Would make all voting be done by mail-in ballots.

**SB 451.** Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This bill would amend Title 71 and give people with disabilities additional points on the **State Civil Service Exam**. Referred to State Government, March 14, 2023.

Impact: By giving additional points to people with disabilities on the State Civil Service Exam, this would allow PA to be a leader in disability hiring.

**SB 452.** Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This bill would create the **Office for People with Disabilities** within and to be administered by the Office of the Governor and make the office permanent by statute. Referred to State Government, March 14, 2023.

Impact: Would permanently establish the Office for People with Disabilities within and to be administered by the Office of the Governor.

**SB 506.** Introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R – Luzerne). This bill would strengthen the state's **guardianship laws**. Referred to Senate Judiciary on March 14, 2023. Referred to House Judiciary, June 27, 2023.

Impact: This bill would work to make sure that situations regarding abuse and exploitation in guardianship are prevented across the state by limiting guardianship to a last resort option.

**SB 511.** Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide Insurance **Coverage for Wheelchair Maintenance**. Referred to Health and Human Services, March 15, 2023.

Impact: Would require that wheelchair users in the Commonwealth, whether publicly or privately insured, have access to two wheelchair maintenance well-visits per year covered by their insurance

**SB 605.** Senator Maria Collett (D-Montgomery). This bill would provide for **adult mental health** program funding. Referred to Health and Human Services, April 19, 2023. Also, see HB 849.

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Impact: Would allocate funds to mental health services and workforce development.

**SB 607.** Introduced by Senator Judy Ward (R-Blair). This bill would extend the **PACE/PACENET** COLA moratorium to December 31, 2025, allowing thousands of older Pennsylvanians to retain the benefit of PACE and PACENET. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth April 28, 2023. Referred to House Aging and Older Adults Services, June 20, 2023. Also, see **HB 1184**.

Impact: Would benefit nearly 29,400 seniors in PA by extending the prescription drug assistance programs for seniors to 2025 instead of 2023.

**SB 735.** Introduced by Senator Art Haywood (D-Montgomery). This bill would prohibit the charging of **admission fees** for events for personal care attendants of person with disability; and imposing penalties. Referred to Health and Human Services, June 6, 2023. Also, see **HB 1104**.

Impact: Require waived admission fees for personal care attendants of people with disabilities.

**SB 813.** Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would allow constituents to obtain a **disability placard** in their respective legislative district offices rather than waiting to receive them in the mail. Referred to Transportation, June 14, 2023.

Impact: Would allow individuals to obtain handicap parking placards in their respective legislative district offices rather than receiving them in the mail from PennDOT.

**SB 840.** Introduced by Senator Rosemary Brown (R-Monroe). This bill would establish the **Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Division**, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Advisory Committee and the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders State Plan; and making an appropriation. Referred to Aging and Youth, July 11, 2023.

Impact: Expand the way in which PA addresses Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorder Division (ADRD) by establishing an permanent division and an advisory committee.

# Resolutions

**HR 38.** Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This Resolution directs the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study on public **transportation services for individuals with disabilities**, establish a legislative task force and advisory committee and issue a report of findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives. Referred to Transportation, March 13, 2023.

Impact: Directs the Joint State Government Commission to establish a legislative task force on public transportation efficacy, with a specific focus on the impact of Pennsylvania's current delivery of services to individuals with disabilities.

**HR 165.** Introduced by Representative Patty Kim (D-Dauphin). This Resolution directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study on the effect of **workforce shortages** on State supported Medicaid home and community-based services waiver programs and the Pennsylvania Lottery funded OPTIONS programs in this Commonwealth. Referred to Aging and Adult Services, June 27, 2023.

Impact: Will examine wage rates for home health aides, personal care attendants, direct support professionals, older adult daily living center providers, and community-based mental health providers in the HCBS system.

**HR166.** Introduced by Representative Joe Hogan (R-Bucks). This Resolution designates the month of July 2023 as "**Disability Pride Month**" in Pennsylvania. Referred to Human Services, June 27, 2023. Reported as committed, June 28, 2023.

Impact: Designates the month of July 2023 as "Disability Pride Month" in Pennsylvania.

**HR 174.** Introduced by Representative James B. Struzzi II (R-Indiana). This Resolution directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study and issue a report on the current status, management and implementation of mass or public **transit in Pennsylvania's rural communities**. Referred to Transportation, July 7, 2023.

Impact: Would direct a comprehensive study on public transit in rural PA.

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**SR 35.** Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This Resolution designates the month of March 2023 as “**Disability Awareness Month**” in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, Feb. 21,

Impact: Designates the month of March 2023 as “Disability Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania.

## National News

### **Biden - Harris Administration Announces Most Sweeping Set of Executive Actions to Improve Care in History**

President Biden signed an executive order that included more than 50 directives to nearly every cabinet-level agency to expand access to affordable, high-quality care, and provide support for care workers and family caregivers. While acknowledging the long waiting lists that people with disabilities must stay on, the executive order will enhance job quality for long-term care workers by directing HHS to consider several regulations. The Executive Order also aims to engage people with disabilities and their families in the design of federal assistance programs.

Read Full Fact Sheet Here:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/18/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-most-sweeping-set-of-executive-actions-to-improve-care-in-history/>

### **Resources on Supporting Adults with IDD and their Aging Caregivers**

CMS released a set of resources designed to support state Medicaid and partner agencies that play critical roles in designing and delivering supports and services that meet the current and future needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their aging parents and caregivers. There are 4 new resources available:

How State Agencies Can Anticipate and Meet the

Needs of Adults with IDD and Their Aging Caregivers:

[https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/State\\_Agencies.pdf](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/State_Agencies.pdf)

State Policies and Practices to Support Person-Centered Planning Across the Lifespan for Individuals with IDD and Their Aging Caregivers:

[https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/Person\\_Centered\\_Planning.pdf](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/Person_Centered_Planning.pdf)

State Policies and Practices to Support Aging Caregivers of Adults with IDD:

[https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/Support\\_for\\_Aging\\_Caregivers.pdf](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/Support_for_Aging_Caregivers.pdf)

State Spotlights: Supporting Adults with IDD and Their Aging Caregivers:

[https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/Adults\\_with\\_IDD\\_State\\_Spotlights.pdf](https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/downloads/Adults_with_IDD_State_Spotlights.pdf)

### **Report Highlights Unequal Access to Special Education Services**

The National Institute for Early Education Research releases “States of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education: Looking at Equity”, a report that finds that not all young children with disabilities have equal access to essential services at a young age. This state-by-state report investigates access to Early Intervention (EI) for children birth to age 3 and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) for children ages 3 to 5 not yet in kindergarten in the 2020-2021 school year along the lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, race/ethnicity, gender, and state variation.

Read Full Report Here:

<https://www.ffyf.org/new-report-highlights-unequal-access-to-special-education-services/>

### **DSP Survey Report**

The 2023 Relias DSP Survey Report highlights a variety of interesting insights into intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) care and the experiences of direct support professionals (DSP) in the field. Based on the survey data, we

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can see that a desire for workplace wellness, a thirst for learning opportunities, and a yearning for career growth options are driving DSPs' attitudes toward work.

Read Full Report Here:

<https://www.relias.com/resource/dsp-survey-report>

## **Ed Department Tells States to Step Up IDEA Compliance**

“Citing a pattern of failures, federal education officials are issuing new guidance pressuring states to improve their oversight of special education programs.

The 45-page document released this week by the U.S. Department of Education outlines steps that states should take to enhance their monitoring of IDEA and ensure compliance in school districts and early intervention programs.”

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2023/07/25/ed-department-tells-states-to-step-up-idea-compliance/30472/>

## **Continuing the Fight to Fulfill the Promise of the ADA**

“The ADA set expectations for equal access and established the right to community living, and it has changed our country in innumerable ways. Its passage was an important milestone in the fight for disability rights, but it was not the endpoint. More than three decades later, its promises remain unfulfilled for far too many disabled people.”

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/continuing-fight-fulfill-promise-ada>

## **Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Over \$40 Billion to Connect Everyone in America to Affordable, Reliable, High-Speed Internet**

“Department of Commerce announced funding for each state, territory and the District of Columbia

for high-speed internet infrastructure deployment through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program—a \$42.45 billion grant program created in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and administered by the Department of Commerce.”

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/06/26/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-over-40-billion-to-connect-everyone-in-america-to-affordable-reliable-high-speed-internet/>

## **CMS Releases Revised Guidance for Historic Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program**

“Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released revised guidance detailing the requirements and parameters of the new Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program for the first round of negotiations, which will occur during 2023 and 2024 and result in prices that will be effective beginning in 2026.”

<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-releases-revised-guidance-historic-medicare-drug-price-negotiation-program>

## **HHS Office for Civil Rights Resolves Complaints with CVS and Walgreens to Ensure Timely Access to Medications for Women and Support Persons with Disabilities**

“OCR provided technical assistance to CVS and Walgreens to ensure women, including women with disabilities, receive timely access to lawfully prescribed medications. As a result, the pharmacies implemented new processes to promote access to medication by preventing potential delays.”

<https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-providers/compliance-enforcement/agreements/cvs-walgreens/index.html>

## **Blind Health Expo 2023**

“Register now for the 2nd annual Blind Health Expo! The Blind Health Expo is the largest, 2-day,

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virtual expo of healthcare information, products, services, and medication for individuals in the blind, low vision, and disability communities.”

The expo is Friday, December 1 – Saturday, December 2nd.

<https://accessiblepharmacy.com/blind-health-expo-2023/>

## Words Matter Act

Words Matter Act - Introduced by Reps. Pocan (Wisconsin), Sessions (Texas), McMorris-Rodgers (Washington) and D.C. Delegate Holmes-Norton : A bipartisan House group introduced a bill to strike more than two dozen instances of outdated and derogatory terminology describing intellectual disability from federal law.

## FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023

Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) introduced the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023 which would improve safety for consumers, expand the aviation workforce and enhance protections for travelers with disabilities. There are several

components of this bill that would prioritize accessibility including:

- Requires DOT issue an advisory circular that provides guidance to airlines on publishing information related to powered wheelchairs, including the dimensions of aircraft cargo holds, and evaluate the frequency and types of mishandling of mobility aids and take actions towards making in-flight wheelchair seating available.
- Requires DOT issue regulations regarding seating accommodations for passengers with disabilities that takes into account being seated next to their companion.
- Require annual staff training regarding assisting people with disabilities on the use of on-board wheelchairs and the right to request an on-board wheelchair.

# Contact PIE

Contact the PIE Team with any questions, comments, suggestions, or information to share at PIE, c/o The Arc of Pennsylvania, 1007 Mumma Road, Suite 100, Lemoyne, PA 17043, by email at [pie@thearcpa.org](mailto:pie@thearcpa.org) or by phone at 800-692-7258.

- **A Slice of Pie** is available by email and contains hyperlinks for ease of accessing websites and internet documents and resources.
- PIE Alerts, PIE Information, and PIE Job Postings are available by email to keep people informed about disability issues between newsletters.
- Sign up for A Slice of Pie or PIE electronic messages by phone at 800-692-7258 or by emailing [pie@thearcpa.org](mailto:pie@thearcpa.org).
- Individuals who already get A Slice of Pie and/or PIE electronic messages can make changes at any time by clicking “Update Profile/Email Address” at the end of any PIE email message.
- A Slice of Pie is available at the Developmental Disabilities Council website [www.paddc.org](http://www.paddc.org), by clicking on “Publications” and “Slice of Pie”. Archived editions can also be found there.
- **A Slice of Pie** is available in alternate format upon request.
- The PIE office will download, copy, and mail information mentioned in A Slice of Pie upon request.

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## Change of Information?

We want to be certain that you do not miss an issue of *A Slice of Pie*, so please send name or address changes either by phone 800-692-7258 or by email to [pie@thearcpcpa.org](mailto:pie@thearcpcpa.org). Thank you.

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