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The Arc of Pennsylvania Responds to Governor Wolf's Proposed Budget

HARRISBURG, PA (DATE) --- The Arc of Pennsylvania is closely monitoring the FY 2022-2023 state budget and the subsequent legislative deliberations on behalf of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), including the over 12,000 individuals in the Commonwealth who continue to wait for home and community-based services.

Governor Wolf's proposed \$43.7 billion budget, unveiled on February 8th, provides increases in areas that are critical to Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities and autism, and their families. Executive Director, Sherri Landis states that, "The Arc of Pennsylvania applauds Governor Wolf for his continued funding to remove people from the waiting list and an increase in the special education budget for the Commonwealth. "

This budget includes:

- \$18.8 million to move 832 individuals with intellectual disabilities off of the emergency waiting list - 732 to the Community Living Waiver and 100 to the Consolidated Waiver;
- \$200 million increase to Special Education; and
- \$5.1 million to support Community Transition from Intermediate Care Facilities

Yet, there are some serious gaps in the 2022-2023 budget. This budget does not provide additional funding for a rate increase for those critical Early Intervention providers and Direct Support Professionals. The Arc of Pennsylvania is asking the General Assembly to provide adequate funding to address the service rates of these critical life changing services.

Landis states, "While The Arc of Pennsylvania is grateful for the initial first step proposed by the Rate Refresh recently done by the Office of Developmental Programs, it is not enough for providers to recruit and retain in the wake of COVID-19, The Great Resignation, and inflation. This workforce is critical to the care and safety of people with disabilities. Family members have had to quit their jobs to fulfill the role that direct support professionals once provided."

For 72 years, The Arc of Pennsylvania has worked to ensure that children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive the supports and services they need, are included in their community, and have control over their own lives. The non-profit organization is part of The Arc US and is affiliated with local chapters covering 50 counties representing 13,000 members across the Commonwealth. The Arc of Pennsylvania advocates for quality services and to protect the rights of our constituency, providing information and resources to families, and increasing public awareness.

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Editor's Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC, and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.