

Disability Matters Radio Show with Joyce Bender
December 11, 2018

#AdvocacyMatters

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives is set to vote on a bipartisan piece of legislation called the IMPROVE Act, which renews the Money Follows the Person program for 3 months. The bill number is H.R. 7217 and it has bipartisan support. The legislation was introduced on December 6, 2018 by Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY).

Money Follows the Persons is a program that gets seniors and individuals with disabilities out of nursing homes and back into the communities if it is their choice. This is also called “home and community-based services”.

The program must be renewed, even for a short 3-month period because states are running out of their federal Money Follows the Person funding. States need additional funds to fully fund their programs. The short-3-month renewal will bridge the gap until the new congress convenes and can consider more permanent legislation in 2019.

8 states have exhausted their funding: Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Texas, and Virginia.

There rest of us – our states will run out of Money Follows the Person Money at the end of December 2018.

H.R. 7217 is on the House calendar under the suspension of the rules today. It is a technical term in the House meaning the short-term renewal of Money Follows the person is non-controversial

and the House will suspend rules and likely see the vote close to or completely unanimous.

As we know, Congress only has days left before they adjourn for the holiday break, so this bill must pass today and a companion bill in the Senate must pass soon.

The companion Senate bill is S. 2227 introduced by Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). The Senate bill is also a bipartisan effort.

What's important is that your #AdvocacyMatters. Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Senators and Representatives. Tell them you are concerned that Money Follows the Person in your state has ended or will end and the Improve Act must pass before the end of December. Your calls matter. Call today (202) 224-3121. The House vote may happen by 3:45 pm. The Senate vote should happen within the next 2 weeks.

Thanks Joyce.