



March 23, 2020

To: Members of the Pennsylvania Delegation

Re: Disability Community Coronavirus Needs

Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) is the organization designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under federal law to protect the rights of and advocate for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. DRP works to ensure that individuals with disabilities are able to live the lives they choose, free from abuse, neglect, discrimination, and segregation. DRP's clients include children and adults with disabilities across Pennsylvania who receive or are in need of services so that they can live and work in the community.

We write today because we are concerned that Congress' response to the coronavirus pandemic is not adequately addressing the needs of the millions of people in this country with disabilities, who are among those most affected by this crisis. While the Family First Act that was signed into law last week provided a starting point, more must be done to support people with disabilities throughout this pandemic.

The disability community has identified priorities that need to be addressed and the CARES Act (S. 3548) that was just introduced in response to the coronavirus pandemic does nothing to address those priorities.

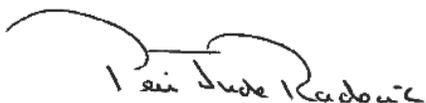
DRP asks that you please work with your colleagues to ensure the following priorities are included:

- Increased Medicaid funding to help states cope with increased need for home and community-based services by people with disabilities and seniors and permanent funding for Money Follows the Person program.

- Paid leave coverage for when a person needs to fill in to provide care to a family member with a disability because their care worker is sick or their program closes. The Families First Act left out family members of adults with disabilities and seniors in these circumstances.
- Emergency income relief that includes people with disabilities. This means eliminating or raising asset limits in the means tested programs many people with disabilities rely on, including SSI, SNAP, and Medicaid.
- Protections for the civil rights of people with disabilities. No legislation should include any limitations on the civil rights protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or the Affordable Care Act.
- Significant increases to states, schools, and districts to educate and provide services for students with disabilities. This includes more funding to SEAs and LEAs for IDEA instructional and support services.
- Healthcare must be equitable. Congress must issue a statement regarding rationing of care to ensure that when rationing of treatment begins, decisions about medical treatment are made without discriminating on the basis of disability. See a letter from the National Council on Disability [here](#).
- Access to a 90-day supply of medication and medical supplies and ongoing access to long-term services and supports
- Provide additional funding to states to ensure accessible voting as states are moving to absentee and mail-in voting.

Please contact Jennifer Garman, Director of Government Affairs with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peri Jude Radecic". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the beginning.

Peri Jude Radecic
Chief Executive Officer