



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

August 2026

Dear Pennsylvanians with disabilities, families, advocates, and allies:

In the wake of recent federal actions targeting the disability community, I wanted you to hear directly from me that the Commonwealth remains committed to protecting your rights, dignity, independence, and active participation in our communities.

I have your back and as long as I am Governor, my Administration will work to ensure you can live, work, and participate in the community of your choosing. Since I became your Governor three and a half years ago, my Administration has worked to protect and expand disability rights. A key part of that work has been ensuring Pennsylvanians with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and have a say in the decisions that affect their life.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the United States Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision protect people with disabilities from discrimination and unjustified segregation.

For generations, people with disabilities were too often separated from their families and communities and given little say in where or how they lived. The disability community fought to change that, and Pennsylvania is better because of that advocacy. My Administration is continuing that work and building on it.

In April, I signed three Executive Orders to reaffirm and strengthen our commitment to disability rights and protections, creating the Governor's Advisory Commission on People with Disabilities, protecting disability-related information, and continuing the work of the Developmental Disabilities Council.

I created the Advisory Commission to provide those with disabilities a voice in the decisions made on issues important to their community. People with disabilities deserve a real seat at the table. They deserve to be heard, respected, and included when government makes decisions that affect their lives.

At the same time, we have put real resources behind this commitment, supporting Pennsylvanians with a wide range of disabilities and at every stage of life. The 2024–25 bipartisan budget included \$354.8 million in state and federal funding to expand home- and community-based services and strengthen the direct support workforce — and my Administration secured \$74 million in the 2026–27 budget to continue this work. Today, more than 42,000 Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities

and autism receive services in their homes or communities — the highest number in Commonwealth history. Since February 2024, these investments have also helped reduce our adult emergency waiting list for services for Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities and autism by 39 percent.

The 2025—26 bipartisan budget built on that progress by investing an additional \$21 million in our direct care workforce, helping increase wages for approximately 8,500 participant-directed direct care workers. These workers support more than 7,700 adults with physical disabilities and older Pennsylvanians who choose and direct the assistance they receive in their own homes and communities.

Together, these investments support Pennsylvanians across the disability community. They help people pursue meaningful work, exercise greater choice and independence, and remain connected to the communities they call home.

I know there is still more work to do. Too many Pennsylvanians continue to face barriers to accessible housing, transportation, education, employment, health care, communication, and full participation in their communities. You have my commitment that my Administration will keep listening, keep investing, and keep working to identify and reduce those barriers.

No matter what changes may come at the federal level, Pennsylvania's commitment under my Administration will not change. We will continue pursuing the principles of the ADA and the *Olmstead* decision, protect the rights of people with disabilities, and support opportunities for Pennsylvanians to live with dignity, choice, and independence in their communities.

Thank you for your advocacy and your commitment to supporting your fellow Pennsylvanians.



Governor Josh Shapiro