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Good morning Chairman Adolph and Appropriations Committee Members. Thank you for your time today. My name is Tom Carasiti, I'm from Pike County and a volunteer on The Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign.

We were recently surprised, as were many of you, that the proposed initiative many of you supported was no longer available, including funding for the 2016 special needs graduates.

I'll briefly recap the proposed increase for the budget line item of ID Community Waivers v. the enacted line item. I'll refer to a chart I included at the bottom of my testimony. Above the black line in the chart you see the budget line item increase. In February the Administration proposed a \$71.4 million increase for ID Community Waivers. The column below was the budget description, or explanation that makes-up the total proposed increase. And you can see \$11.5 million of the total increase was set aside for a Waiting List initiative. Now go back above the black line and in the next column to the right you see the approved or enacted amount of \$80.4 million. What you approved for the budget line item was even \$9 million higher than the proposed increase for ID Waivers. However, looking down that column is a recent report from DHS on how it plans to use that increase. You see the two highlighted categories where unanticipated increases in current program costs forced DHS to reallocate all of the Waiting List initiative to cover its run-rate. Money was used from the planned initiative to cover increases in costs-to-carry.

But as DHS and ODP retool their budget, we should not allow our 2016 special needs graduates and elderly care-givers on the waiting list to bear the entire weight of this re-allocation and not be served, which incidentally is the only Medicaid program I know of with a wait list. We need to keep the line moving and make use of the hundreds of millions already invested in special education. We've passed very good legislation regarding employment first and rights to work for the disabled but there's a disconnect if we don't fund the transportation and job coaches provided by the waivers. Special Education funding, OVR involvement, and employment first means nothing if we don't continue their support through the waivers.

The initiative requires \$11.5 million to serve approximately 700 special needs graduates and 250 other individuals in emergency status. That cost to prevent a growth in the waiting list numbers is trivial when compared to a \$31.5 billion budget. It's only .000365 relative to the entire budget. In terms I can understand, if my household budget is \$50,000 I would only have to find \$18.25 to fix a problem.

This issue is non-partisan, some of your families have a member with developmental disability; this hearing proves how much you're convinced of this cause's worthiness. You have recently added hundreds of millions new dollars for education and other worthy causes. Please review budget priorities. There must be another 11.5 million somewhere to service this year's most critical group that will keep the waiting list from growing.

I would also suggest in the future creating a separate budget line item for ID/ASD Waiting List Initiatives. Currently it's only a description in the overall budget for ID Community Waivers. Therefore it's a small portion of a much larger target during budget debates. The separate line item will also prevent what occurred this year: that is, when assembly members vote 'yes' or 'no' to a waiting list initiative, they will get in return exactly what the majority voted for. The line item would be a small amount by comparison, and the line item could be much smaller, probably by half, if we properly enroll graduates during the last month of their junior year (more following on this subject from another speaker).

Another suggestion is to create a dedicated funding stream. We have gas surcharges for roads, lottery for senior living, housing trust fund to subsidize housing, state's with social impact bonds to reduce recidivism, cigarette taxes for anti-smoking campaigns, and many other creative funding sources for worthy causes. Can we not find a dedicated revenue source that will help developmentally disabled have the same life you and I take for granted? There are dozens of ideas or options that would not unfairly break the back of our state's taxpayers.

There's a large source of money used for state or ICF institutions. The average cost per person per year is almost \$400,000 for the 5 state institutions. Although it won't help this year's waiting list needs, a long term plan to close institutions will generate more money for the less costly and more supportive community options.

Filling waiver spots with only the current rate of attrition will add approximately another 1000 new entries to the wait list. Without a new initiative the waiting list will grow larger. That's the wrong direction if we want to reach a level where attrition is sufficient. A study of Pennsylvania's demographics and waiting list trends would provide that number, a number when community waiver enrollment is large enough where annual attrition can replace an annual initiative. But until the waiver program has that 'critical mass' we must continue to support, at the very least, the proposed initiative. We don't want to begin a trend in reverse of recent gains made by previous initiatives you've voted for.

Representatives, I provided a quick look at the proposed and enacted ID Community Waiver line item. I've made some suggestions where you can help. Some require careful long term planning such as releasing money from expensive institutional care. We also need to grow our enrollment numbers, not waiting list numbers, to a level where attrition supports our graduates and most needy. I've suggested

creating a budget line item so initiative money is not pooled with other expenses and assembly members can expect what they vote for in the budget. I've also suggested finding a direct revenue source similar to other projects in the state. Those are good approaches for next fiscal year, but none of those will take care of our current fiscal year's graduates and emergency needs. Please do your best to re-instate \$11.5 million dollars for their supports. We've spent so much to help families and special needs students through the education system. We pass legislation to prepare them for jobs while in school. Now let's not confine them to an unfulfilling life on the couch because we can't find \$11.5 million somewhere in \$31.5 billion.... or just \$18.25 out of \$50,000.

As you know, our team meets with many of you directly and/or your staff advisors throughout the budget process to advocate for individuals waiting for adult services. We met with over 75 representatives or senators this past year. All of you expressed understanding and a keen interest in our cause. Many of yours or your staff's families are personally touched by a family member with a developmental disability. You shared some of your stories of those families and the similar need of some of your constituents. The fact you've convened this special hearing shows your concern for this need. Hopefully that same concern will compel you to find funds to re-instate an initiative amount. Thank you.

Description	Admin. Proposed	Enacted	Difference Proposed from Enacted
Total Budget Increase for Community ID Waivers Line Item	71.4	80.4	9
Breakdown (Comments) for Line Item Increase:			
	Admin. Proposed	Current DHS Report	Difference
To accommodate increased utilization and program costs	41.2	53.7	12.5
Replace prior year federal Balancing Incentive Program funds	10.5	10.5	0
Replace funds from lower federal participation.	3.8	3.8	0
Annualize services for 1,075 individuals from FY 15 - 16 initiatives.	4.7	11	6.3
To reflect individuals transferring from ICF/ID	1.7	0.7	-1
Adjustment for prior year settlements and appeals	-3	0	3
HCBS Initiative for 69 individuals currently residing in state center	1	0.7	-0.3
Waiting List Initiative	11.5	0	-11.5
Note: all numbers in millions rounded to 1 decimal.			