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2 84th General Assembly
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By: Representatives C. Taylor, House, Seawel, Adams, Anderson, Bennett, Berry, Biggs, Bledsoe, P. Bookout, Borhauer, Boyd, Bright, Childers, Creekmore, Dangeau, Dees, Gillespie, Green, Haak, Hardwick, Harris, Hickinbotham, Hutchinson, C. Johnson, Judy, Kenney, Key, King, Lamoureux, Ledbetter, Matayo, Medley, Norton, Parks, Pritchard, Roebuck, Rosenbaum, Schulte, Sumpter, J. Taylor, Thomas, Thyer, Verkamp, Walters, Weaver, Wood
By: Senators Hill, Bisbee, Broadway, Critcher, Faris, Laverty, Trusty, Womack, Wooldridge

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE CRISIS IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING DIRECT-SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS IMPEDES THE AVAILABILITY OF A STABLE, HIGH QUALITY DIRECT SUPPORT WORKFORCE.

Subtitle

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE EMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN DIRECT-SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS IMPEDES THE AVAILABILITY OF A STABLE, HIGH QUALITY DIRECT SUPPORT WORKFORCE.

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WHEREAS, more than three hundred thousand (300,000) Arkansans have disabilities, including individuals with developmental disabilities, and approximately three hundred fifty thousand (350,000) Arkansans are age sixty-five (65) and over; and

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WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities and those in the aging community have substantial limitations in their functional capacities, including limitations in two (2) or more of the areas of self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and the continuous need for individually planned and coordinated services; and



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2 WHEREAS, for the past two (2) decades individuals with disabilities and
3 those in the aging community and their families have increasingly expressed
4 their desire to live and work in their communities, joining the mainstream of
5 American life; and

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7 WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court, in its decision in Olmstead
8 v. L.C., affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities and those in the
9 aging community to receive community-based services as an alternative to
10 institutional care; and

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12 WHEREAS, the demand for community supports and services is rapidly
13 growing, as states comply with the Olmstead decision and continue to move
14 more individuals from institutions into the community; and

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16 WHEREAS the demand will also continue to grow as family caregivers age,
17 individuals with disabilities and those in the aging community live longer,
18 waiting lists grow, and services expand; and

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20 WHEREAS, our nation's long-term care delivery system is dependent upon
21 a disparate array of public and private funding sources and is not a
22 conventional industry, but rather is financed primarily through third-party
23 insurers; and

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25 WHEREAS, Medicaid financing of supports and services to individuals
26 with disabilities and those in the aging community varies considerably from
27 state to state, causing significant disparities across geographic regions,
28 among differing groups of consumers, and between community and institutional
29 supports; and

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31 WHEREAS, outside of families, private providers that employ direct-
32 support professionals deliver the preponderance of supports and services for
33 individuals with disabilities and those in the aging persons living in the
34 community; and

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36 WHEREAS, direct-support professionals provide, on a day-to-day basis, a

1 wide range of supportive services to individuals with disabilities and those
2 in the aging community, including habilitation, health needs, personal care
3 and hygiene, employment, transportation, recreation, and house keeping and
4 other home management-related supports and services so that these individuals
5 can live and work in their communities; and

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7 WHEREAS direct-support professionals generally assist individuals with
8 disabilities and those in the aging community to lead a self-directed family,
9 community, and social life; and

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11 WHEREAS, private providers and the individuals for whom they provide
12 supports and services are in jeopardy as a result of the growing crisis in
13 recruiting and retaining a direct-support workforce; and

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15 WHEREAS, providers of supports and services to individuals with
16 disabilities and those in the aging community typically draw from a labor
17 market that competes with other entry-level jobs that provide less physically
18 and emotionally demanding work, and higher pay; and

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20 WHEREAS, annual turnover rates of direct-support workers range from
21 forty percent (40%) to seventy-five percent(75%); and

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23 WHEREAS, high rates of employee vacancies and turnover threaten the
24 ability of providers to achieve their core mission, which is the provision of
25 safe and high-quality supports to individuals disabilities and those in the
26 aging community; and

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28 WHEREAS ,direct-support staff turnover is emotionally disruptive for
29 the individuals being served; and

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31 WHEREAS, many family members are becoming increasingly afraid that
32 there will be no one available to take care of their sons and daughters with
33 disabilities and aging individuals who are living in the community; and

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35 WHEREAS, this workforce shortage is the most significant barrier to
36 implementing the Olmstead decision and undermines the expansion of community

1 integration as called for by President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, placing
2 the community support infrastructure at risk;

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4 NOW THEREFORE,

5 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
6 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

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8 THAT the Arkansas General Assembly expresses its sense that community
9 inclusion and enhanced lives for individuals with disabilities and those in
10 the aging community is at serious risk because of the crisis in recruiting
11 and retaining direct-support professionals, which impedes the availability of
12 a stable, high quality direct-support workforce.

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Arkansas General Assembly seeks to address
15 the crisis by taking advantage of all resources, both federal and state, for
16 developing and expanding career options and opportunities to meet this
17 workforce crisis of direct-care professions in Arkansas.

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19 */s/ C. Taylor, et al*

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