

A Resolution recognizing the invaluable role of Direct Support Professionals in the lives of Kentuckians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court has affirmed federal and state policies that assert the right of an individual to live in his or her home and community; and

WHEREAS, Direct support professionals, direct care workers, personal assistants and attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals are the primary providers of publicly-funded, long-term supports and services for millions of individuals; and

WHEREAS, A direct support professional must build a close, trusted relationship with a person with disabilities, while assisting him or her with their most intimate needs each day; and

WHEREAS, These professionals provide a broad range of support involving meal preparation; help with medications; bathing; dressing; personal mobility; transportation and general daily affairs; and

WHEREAS, Direct support professionals enable people with disabilities to live meaningful, productive lives, and are key to allowing them to live independently in their communities, avoiding more costly institutional care; and

WHEREAS, Most direct support professionals are now employed in home and community-based settings, and this trend is projected to increase over the decade; and

WHEREAS, Many direct support professionals are forced to leave their jobs because of inadequate wages and benefits, creating high turnover and vacancies that adversely affect the quality of support to individuals with disabilities;

WHEREAS, The majority of direct support professionals are female, and many are the sole breadwinners of their families;

WHEREAS, a credentialing program for Direct Support Professionals working in community human services is essential to providing national recognition for the contributions and competence of Direct Support Professionals who apply for and meet the credentialing standards.

WHEREAS, a credentialing program affords Direct Support Professionals the opportunity to commit to the profession of direct support through its tiered credentialing program.

WHEREAS, a complete expert training program in the key Direct Support Professional competencies of empowerment, communication, planning, ethical practice and advocacy to become a fully certified Direct Support Professional promotes the development of a highly competent human services workforce which supports individuals in achieving their life goals.

WHEREAS, a Direct Support Professional Certification Program recognizes professionals who have obtained specialized training and have demonstrated competence in providing specialized support to individuals with disabilities in community human services.

WHEREAS, There is a critical and growing nationwide shortage of direct support professionals.

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. That the members of the General Assembly, both individually and collectively, recognize the value of Kentucky's Direct Support Professional workforce.

➔Section 2. That the members of the General Assembly, recognize that building and maintaining a stable, well-trained, high-quality direct support professional workforce to provide support and services to individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities and the aging community is important in advancing Kentucky's commitment to community integration and personal security for these individuals and their families.

➔Section 3. That the Kentucky General Assembly supports the development and implementation of a national volunteer credentialing process for Direct Support Professionals.

➔Section 4. That the Kentucky General Assembly hereby declares the month of February, 2011 "Direct Support Professionals Recognition Month" in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.