

ENGROSSED SENATE
CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 81

By: Cain, Aldridge, Branan, Brogdon,
Capps, Coates, Coffee, Corn,
Crutchfield, Dunlap, Easley (Mary),
Fair, Fisher, Ford, Gumm, Harrison,
Helton, Hobson, Horner, Johnson,
Kerr, Laster, Laughlin, Lawler,
Leftwich (Debbe), Lerblance,
Littlefield, Maddox, Milacek,
Monson, Morgan, Myers, Nichols,
Price, Pruitt, Rabon, Reynolds,
Riley, Robinson, Rozell, Shurden,
Smith, Snyder, Taylor, Wilcoxson,
Wilkerson, Williams and Williamson
of the Senate

and

Lindley of the House

A Concurrent Resolution supporting the goal of
community inclusion for the developmentally disabled;
and reaffirming the need for a quality, stable,
direct support workforce.

WHEREAS, there are nearly four million Americans who are living
with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.

Individuals with developmental disabilities include those with
mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, epilepsy,
and other related conditions; and

WHEREAS, individuals with mental retardation and other
developmental disabilities have substantial limitations in three or
more areas, including: self-care, receptive and expressive
language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for
independent living, and economic self-sufficiency, as well as the
continuous need for individually planned and coordinated services;
and

WHEREAS, for the past two decades individuals with mental
retardation and other developmental disabilities and their families
have increasingly expressed their desire to live and work in their

communities and not in institutions, joining the mainstream of American life; and

WHEREAS, the "Olmstead" decision, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to receive community-based services as an alternative to institutional care. The demand for community supports and services is expected to grow rapidly as states comply with Olmstead and continue to move more individuals from institutions into the community; and

WHEREAS, the demand will also continue to grow as family caregivers age, individuals with developmental disabilities live longer, waiting lists grow, and services expand. The recruitment pool is also shrinking due to competition from higher paying, less stressful jobs. Outside of families, private providers that employ direct support professionals deliver the majority of supports and services for persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities in the community; and

WHEREAS, direct support professionals provide a wide range of supportive services to people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities on a day-to-day basis, including health care, personal care and hygiene, transportation, recreation, housekeeping and other home management-related supports and services so that these individuals can live and work in their communities. Direct support professionals generally assist individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to lead a self-directed family, community, and social life; and

WHEREAS, private providers and the people for whom they provide supports and services are in jeopardy as a result of the growing crisis in recruiting and retaining a direct support workforce. The average direct support professional earns wages lower than other entry-level positions in other service industries and often lacks key benefits such as health care insurance. Annual turnover rates range from 40 to 75 percent; and

WHEREAS, high employee turnover and vacancies threaten to undermine consumer choice and control, as well as the quality and consistency of long-term supports for persons with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. Direct support staff turnover is emotionally difficult for the people being served; and

WHEREAS, many parents are becoming increasingly afraid that there will be no one available to take care of their sons and daughters who are living with a developmental disability. This workforce shortage is the most significant barrier to implementing Olmstead and undermines the expansion of community integration as called for by President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, placing the community support infrastructure at risk.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 49TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature supports the goal of community inclusion and enhanced lives for people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.

THAT the Oklahoma State Legislature reaffirms that a quality, stable, direct support workforce is necessary to advance this nation's commitment to personal security for people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities, and their families.

Adopted by the Senate the 26th day of May, 2004.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

Adopted by the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____,
2004.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives