

June 25, 2012

VIA EMAIL (governor@pa.gov) & FAX (717-772-8284)

Governor Tom Corbett
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Corbett:

We are writing you today with a critical request. We understand that your administration has proposed eliminating General Assistance, the last resort program for 70,000 Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Last Thursday, the Department of Public Welfare released a draft operations memorandum to stop General Assistance effective July 1 with no advance notice or warning. *See attached.* Most people who receive General Assistance will learn that their General Assistance has ended when they go to withdraw their money to pay their rent in July. **We urge you to reconsider this action and provide at least 60 days notice to these individuals that their sole source of income will be stopped.**

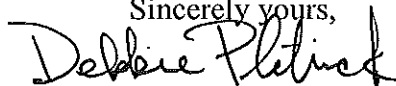
The abrupt termination of General Assistance without notice will cause extreme chaos and confusion. Across Pennsylvania, 69,115 people will lose their sole source of income overnight. Our shelter system and network of human services providers are simply not equipped to deal with this sudden and enormous demand for their services.

Individuals receiving General Assistance have already been found to be disabled by their doctors and temporarily unable to work. It will be very difficult for these individuals to find jobs immediately, especially with 475,000 other Pennsylvanians currently out of work.

The Commonwealth previously restricted eligibility for General Assistance in 1982, 1994, and 1995. Eligibility was restricted in much less drastic ways and to far fewer people than contemplated here. Yet in each case, the Department gave recipients at least 60 days advance notice of the impending changes to their benefits so that they could have fair warning and begin to prepare their next steps.

If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Plotnick at the Mental Health Association at 267-978-0639. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,



Debbie Plotnick, Director of Advocacy
Mental Health Association of
Southeastern Pennsylvania

Heather Arnet, Chief Executive Officer
Women and Girls Foundation

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Drug and Alcohol Service Providers
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Peg Dierkers, Executive Director
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Domestic Violence

Stephen Drachler, Executive Director
United Methodist Advocacy in
Pennsylvania

Deborah Fidel, Executive Director
Pittsburgh Area Jewish Committee
(PAJC)

Enclosure.

Bob Fishman, Executive Director
Resources for Human Development

Susan Frietsche, Senior Staff Attorney
Women's Law Project
Western Pennsylvania Office

Carol Goertzel, President / CEO
Pathways PA

Kathy Jellison, President
SEIU Local 668

Jeannine L. Lisitski, Executive Director
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La'Tasha Mayes, Executive Director
New Voices Pennsylvania: Women of
Color for Reproductive Justice

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CC: Secretary Gary Alexander, Department of Public Welfare
(via email: galexander@pa.gov; & fax (717-772-2062))

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