



Senate of Pennsylvania

August 1, 2019

The Honorable Governor Tom Wolf
225 Main Capital Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor,

Today, August 1, will be a chilling day for many Pennsylvanians. The elimination of the General Assistance (GA) Program by Act 12 delivers a cruel blow to the more than 11,000 people that have been provided life saving benefits under the program. We have been searching through a wide variety of possibilities to provide basic resources for this population to mitigate the damage that the program's elimination will have on their day-to-day lives; however, due to the danger that is immediately posed to the health and welfare of GA beneficiaries, we are asking that you utilize your power to declare a disaster emergency to coordinate the response of state agencies and bring additional resources to bare to help aid this population.

We strongly believe that had you been given an opportunity to veto House Bill 33 without the additional budgetary implications that were loaded into the bill late in the process, you would have stood with GA recipients. But threatened with the lose of millions of dollars for our hospitals, we understand that you were provided no choice. However, there are other resources at your disposal to help lessen the pain Pennsylvanians will feel after today. A disaster declaration will help to bring the myriad departments and programs that exist to help these individuals into one planning room.

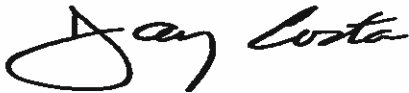
The value of the GA program was the flexibility it offered to people that were desperately in need of basic resources. Housing, healthcare co-payments, transportation access, toiletries, and much more could be attained though the cash assistance. But it also makes putting the puzzle back together for how to help the individuals even more difficult. Each of these services is provided by a different agency or level of government. The opportunity provided by an emergency declaration is an organized response for data collection, data sharing, program coordination, and resource direction that does not exist in the daily operation of state government. Data sharing alone has been a major hurdle for reaching out and coordinating a response.

Much more will need to be done to assist soon-to-be former GA recipients in getting the assistance they need to keep their lives in order. We have heard story after story about how the GA program has lifted people out of poverty and turned their lives around. It has kept people in homes, provided life


saving healthcare, or transportation to get people access to care. We need to find a way to continue to help these people and an emergency declaration will help get the right people to the table for coordinating the response. The opioid emergency declaration has proven your success in this approach and can be replicated here.

We believe that your consideration of this request will continue a process of helping a vulnerable population that was started when the Supreme Court rightly reinstated the GA program. Please work with us to keep the movement afloat and prevent us from leaving these individuals behind.

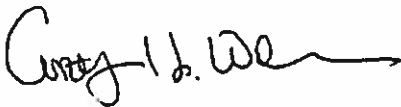
Sincerely,



Senator Jay Costa
Democratic Leader
43rd Senatorial District



Senator Vincent J. Hughes
Democratic Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
7th Senatorial District



Senator Anthony H. Williams
Senate Democratic Whip
8th Senatorial District



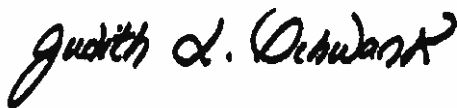
Senator Lawrence Farnese
Democratic Caucus Secretary
1st Senatorial District



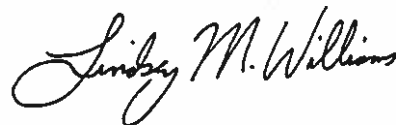
Senator Wayne D. Fontana
Democratic Caucus Chairman
42nd Senatorial District



Senator John P. Blake
Democratic Caucus Administrator
22nd Senatorial District



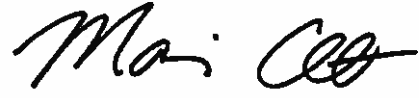
Senator Judith L. Schwank
Democratic Vice-Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
11th Senatorial District



Senator Lindsey Williams
38th Senatorial District



Senator James Brewster
45th Senatorial District



Senator Maria Collett
12th Senatorial District



Senator Andrew Dinniman
19th Senatorial District



Senator Art Haywood
4th Senatorial District



Senator Pam Iovino
37th Senatorial District



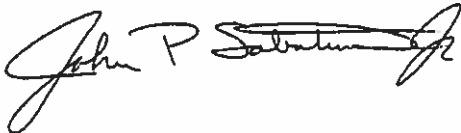
Senator Tim Kearney
26th Senatorial District



Senator Daylin M. Leach
17th Senatorial District



Senator Katie Muth
44th Senatorial District



Senator John Sabatina
5th Senatorial District



Senator Steve Santarsiero
10th Senatorial District



Senator Sharif Street
3rd Senatorial District



Senator Christine M. Tartaglione
2nd Senatorial District