

Testimony for the Appropriations Committee
Submitted by Bill Knight

Good evening Senator Bai, Representative Walker, and the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Bill Knight, and I have come here this evening to urge your committee to restore funding for the centers for independent living to the Department of Rehabilitation Services budget. In the budget that has been proposed by Commissioner Porter, funding for these centers has been zeroed out in both years of the budget. In my opinion it is a mistake to allow the centers for independent living to go unfunded.

When legislation was passed in the 1987 session of the General Assembly, the statute established both the creation and maintenance of a state-wide network of centers for independent living. Given that most of the funding for the state-wide network comes from the state, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for both the letter and spirit of the law to be adhered to.

If the centers for independent living are allowed to remain unfunded in the proposed budget, people with disabilities and their families will be greatly impacted. The centers provide resources and services which allow people who are disabled to live, work, and be a vibrant part of the community of their choice. These resources and services include: information and referral, independent living skills, individual and systems advocacy, and peer support.