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112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 263

Designating the week beginning September 11, 2011, as ''National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week''.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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RESOLUTION

Designating the week beginning September 11, 2011, as ''National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week''.

Whereas direct support professionals, direct care workers, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals (referred to in this preamble as ''direct support professionals'') are the primary providers of publicly-funded long term supports and services for millions of individuals;

Whereas a direct support professional must build a close, trusted relationship with an individual with disabilities;

Whereas a direct support professional assists an individual with disabilities with the most intimate needs, on a daily basis;

Whereas direct support professionals provide a broad range of support, including preparation of meals, helping with medications, bathing, dressing, mobility, transportation to school, work, religious, and recreational activities, and general daily affairs;

Whereas a direct support professional provides essential support to help keep an individual with disabilities connected to such individual's family and community;

Whereas direct support professionals enable individuals with disabilities to live meaningful, productive lives;

Whereas direct support professionals are the key to allowing an individual with disabilities to live successfully in such individual's community, and to avoid more costly institutional care;

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

Whereas direct support professionals work and pay taxes, but many such professionals remain impoverished and are eligible for the same Federal and State public assistance programs on which the individuals with disabilities served by such direct support professionals must depend;

Whereas Federal and State policies, as well as the Supreme Court, in Olmstead v. L.C., 527 U.S. 581 (1999), assert the right of an individual to live in the home and community of the individual;

Whereas, in 2011, the majority of direct support professionals are employed in home and community-based settings and this trend is projected to increase over the decade;

Whereas there is a documented critical and growing shortage of direct support professionals in every community throughout the United States; and

Whereas many direct support professionals are forced to leave jobs due to inadequate wages and benefits, creating high turnover and vacancy rates that research demonstrates adversely affects the quality of supports to individuals with disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning September 11, 2011, as ''National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week'';

(2) recognizes the dedication and vital role of direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities of all ages;

(3) appreciates the contribution of direct support professionals in supporting the needs that reach beyond the capacities of millions of families in the United States;

(4) commends direct support professionals as integral in supporting the long-term support and services system of the United States; and

(5) finds that the successful implementation of the public policies of the United States depends on the dedication of direct support professionals.

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