

## Letter from Senators and Representatives to Caucus Leadership

I write to urge the inclusion of funds in the 2008-09 state budget to begin an Adult Protective Services system for vulnerable adults between the ages of 18 and 59. Less than \$500,000 would be needed for first year funding.

While we have enacted statutes that establish protective services systems for children and for older adults, Pennsylvania is one of only six states which fails to provide the same critically needed protection for people with disabilities between 18 and 59. I have heard horror stories from all over PA about people who have suffered severe abuse—physical, sexual, and financial. Some have died. And the longer we wait the more people who are victimized.

We must pass legislation to create and empower the system. HB 361 and SB 1049 have been introduced and moved into Appropriations Committees. We need to pass one of those bills into law this year. In the meantime, it is essential that the funding necessary to create the protective services system be made part of our budget priorities. Since it will take at least a year after passage of legislation to promulgate regulations and issue RFPs, the only costs in the first year are staffing--a modest amount of no more than \$500,000. It is estimated that the system, once fully implemented, would cost approximately \$6 million dollars. In the out years, we can work to identify supplemental funding streams. But while we wait, people are dying.

We can leave people at risk no longer. I support and ask you to act to include start-up funds for Adult Protective Services in the 2008-09 budget and support the passage of legislation this session.