



State Reps. Kevin Hensley and Mike Ramone were among the officials who joined Gov. John Carney for Tuesday's bill signing in Wilmington.

## **NEWS:**

# **McNesby Act to Improve Wages of those Helping State's Most Vulnerable Citizens**

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2018** – The signing of the legislation earlier this week in Wilmington will result in better pay for those working with some of Delaware's citizens most in need of assistance.

Known as the "[Michael McNesby Full Funding for Adults with I/DD Act](#)," the new law will increase wages the state pays to direct support professionals (DSPs). Among other things, DSPs are tasked with working directly with people with physical and intellectual disabilities to integrate them into the community and improve their quality-of-life.

Supporters of the bipartisan legislation say direct support professionals were only being funded by the state at 75-percent of the market rate established in a 2014 study conducted by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). They say increasing the hourly wages of DSPs is needed to improve recruitment and retention efforts while decreasing staff turnover and position vacancies.

State Rep. Kevin Hensley, R-Odessa-Townsend-Port Penn, was a co-sponsor and leading advocate of the bill authored by State Rep. Melanie Smith, D-Newark-Bear.

"I was proud to have had the opportunity to work on this important initiative, but this is only the first step," Rep. Hensley said.

According to information supplied by the Office of the Controller General, the current budget contains \$4.67 million for the first phase of the wage increase. State analysts estimate the bill will carry an annual cost of \$22.7 million when fully implemented.

"This law represents an obligation on the part of the state to make the needed appropriations in the upcoming budgets to pay these vital service professionals the full wages they are due," Rep. Hensley said.

The bill passed the House of Representatives and the Senate with unanimous votes.

The legislation is named after Michael McNesby, who passed away earlier this year. Born in 1960 with Down syndrome, Mr. McNesby overcame his challenges, working at Elwyn for 28 years. The facility on E. 11th Street in Wilmington hosted Tuesday's bill signing.