

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 288

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Tennessee Technology First Initiative to explore and expand the use of enabling technologies in home and community-based services and supports for Tennesseans with Disabilities.

WHEREAS, Tennesseans with disabilities, including physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities; mental illness; substance abuse; and other disabilities, experience exceptional challenges and obstacles in their lives that often lead to a limited engagement in their communities or a reliance on others to facilitate that engagement; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee is committed to supporting the empowerment of Tennesseans with all levels of ability to achieve their personal and professional best, reduce their reliance on State and federal subsidies, and live as independently as they choose; and

WHEREAS, "enabling technology" is equipment and/or methodologies that, alone or in combination with associated technologies, provides the means to support the individual's increased independence in their homes, communities, and workplaces; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee recognizes that enabling technology shares a complementary relationship to assistive technology and other associated technologies that may be used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with varying degrees of abilities; and

WHEREAS, through the enabling technology program funded by this General Assembly, Tennessee has become a leader in the industry and provided this expertise across the nation through presentations at the Arc National Conference and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, while also establishing an annual Enabling

Technology Summit to educate local stakeholders and a national Enabling Technology consortium of states to share knowledge and experience throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, with continuing technological advancements, Tennessee is committed to increasing the opportunities for its citizens with disabilities to access innovative supportive technology in order to lower the barriers that people with disabilities encounter in their daily lives and promote their independence, confidence, and abilities; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee recognizes that people with disabilities living in rural areas face limited transportation options needed to maintain employment, community inclusion, and overall independence, and that access to new navigational applications and other transportation-based technological resources makes achieving greater financial health and community inclusion through increased independence while navigating public and private transportation services within their communities achievable; and

WHEREAS, the demand for paid support staff who assist people with disabilities is projected to increase, and technology is one tool that can help to supplement and assist those who do the important work of caring for Tennesseans with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities recommended in its 2017 Report on the Direct Support Workforce Crisis that "The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living should provide technical assistance and financial or programmatic incentives to states to promote the use of technology solutions in long-term services and supports, such as remote monitoring, sensors, robotics, and smart homes, to create efficiencies, reduce costs and support community living for people with intellectual disabilities."; and

WHEREAS, while Tennessee recognizes that human relationships are an essential part of all our lives, enabling technology can connect Tennesseans with disabilities with additional assistance to supplement and enhance the in-person care that they receive; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee intends to ensure enabling technology solutions are considered when determining the appropriate services and supports to be provided for Tennesseans with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee commits to a statewide initiative, Technology First, with the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) in partnership with the Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP) and other State agencies coordinating efforts to expand access to enabling technology designed to improve the lives of all Tennesseans with disabilities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we recognize Tennessee as a Technology First state, committed to ensuring the exploration and understanding of enabling technology supports that may allow all Tennesseans with disabilities greater opportunity to live independent and self-fulfilling lives.