



SECRETARY'S OFFICE
Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens

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MRS. TEDDI LEIDEN
President

MAY 14 1 50 PM '79
May 11, 1979

THEODORE E. JOHNSON, Ed. D.
Executive Director
RL
DEPT. OF
PUBLIC WELFARE

The Honorable Richard Thornburgh
Governor of Pennsylvania
Main Capitol
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Thornburgh:

I am writing to urge you to reconsider your recent decision to appeal the Pennhurst Case to the Supreme Court in the event the Broderick decision is upheld at the Appellate level.

During your campaign you shared with me what you believed to be seven major problems facing your Administration and this Association. The two which stand out most clearly in my mind from your September 15, 1978 letter are: (1) "the need to develop community programs to serve the least able and hardest to handle people" and (2) "the need to drastically reduce waste and make better use of tax dollars to improve the quality of services." We heartily agreed with these statements and looked to the Thornburgh Administration with hope and confidence that it would maximize all opportunities to improve the lives of mentally retarded people.

On February 13, 1979, I wrote to you expressing our growing concerns about losing momentum to carry our goals forward. Our fears have been borne out in recent weeks when your decision was announced to appeal the first implementing order in the Pennhurst case. Our fear turned to alarm when your Department of Public Welfare Secretary told the Senate Appropriations Committee on April 18 that in the event the State lost its case at the Appellate level, it would continue its efforts to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. We understand and concur in your philosophy that the Department of Public Welfare must take a leadership role in setting policy and insuring the provision of quality mental retardation services.

However, we believe you are losing a valuable opportunity to use a court decision with which you have no philosophical differences as a lever to bring about real change. The Department of Public Welfare should embrace the Pennhurst decision and take the lead in implementing the subsequent orders. Mentally retarded persons will not benefit by another three to five years court battle which will surely ensue if the decision continues to be appealed.

Because the Appellate Court decision can be expected at any time now, we feel it is most urgent to meet and discuss with you in greater detail our concerns regarding your position to appeal.

We continue to believe you are committed to fulfilling the promises of your campaign. We want to work with you and other members of your Administration to realize the full development of appropriate community programs.

We anxiously await your response to our request for a special meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Teddi Leiden
President