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Disabled want a rep in Welfare Dept

KUALA LUMPUR: A RM500 monthly payment to all registered disabled and at least one disabled person to be represented in the Welfare Department committee handling them.

These requests were made by a group of disabled that met Women, Family and Community Development Minister Senator Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil yesterday.

Malaysian Animal-Assisted

Therapy for the Disabled and Elderly Association president Anthony Siva Balan Thanasayan, who spoke on behalf of the group, said every disabled person deserved a decent standard of living.

"We hope and pray that you can give us RM500 per month. But there should not be any restrictions. If the recipients want to spend the money on stupid things, like cigarettes, let them," he said.

Disabled registered with the ministry currently get between RM150 and RM300.

He said owning a television set was no longer a luxury.

"Are you now going to stop giving us money because we have computers or the Internet at home?"

"Or if we eat Baskin Robbins ice-cream with the money?"

Stanley Anthony, 60, who had a total hip replacement in 1988 after an accident, said he

had been appealing for the past two years against the Welfare Department ruling that those disabled having Astro satellite service should not be given aid.

The *New Straits Times* reported yesterday that this rule applied even if one lived in someone else's house, temporarily or otherwise. The disabled say TV programmes were the only entertainment they had.