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TESTIMONY TO THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

3/13/07

Raised Bill No.: 1338: An Act Concerning a Cost of Living Increase for Private Providers of Health and Human Services

Chairperson Jonathon Harris, Chairperson Peter Villano, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My Name is Paul M. Rosin and I am the Executive Director of Community Residences Inc. a not-for-profit multi-service provider of day, residential, and family support to children and adults with special needs. I am providing testimony as a member of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits.

I have had the opportunity and the honor to work for over thirty years in Connecticut developing and operating programs and services for children and adults with special needs. During that time period I have seen the Department of Mental Retardation, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and DSS move from a primarily State operated institutional model to a Community based service system that is primarily operated by Connecticut's Not-for-Profit Providers. More recently, the Department of Children and families is moving in the same direction:

- There has been a dramatic increase in Therapeutic Foster Homes, Intensive Reunification Programs, Adoptions and Group Homes developed and operated by the Not-for-Profit Community.
- The development of these Programs has allowed many children that have been placed in out of state residential facilities to return to their communities.
- This new program development, has allowed for the development of increased options for troubled kids from our communities and to treat them not warehouse them. With these options in place, DCF is starting to have the ability to act proactively, therapeutically, in an effort to prevent the spiral that leads to hospitalization, institutionalization, and incarceration.

These programs have been developed in collaboration between the Public and Private sector and are to the benefit of children, their families, their communities and ultimately the State. We have a long way to go but for the first time in many years we are starting to effectively utilize our resources. Not-for-Profit Providers continue to struggle to pay a competitive, livable wage to many of its employees, provide and pay health and workers compensation insurance and cover the significantly increasing costs of energy and other consumables. Currently the Governor has a 0% COLA in her budget. In order to ensure that going forward, Connecticut has a strong and vital Not-for-Profit sector that provides high quality services to Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens, we are asking for the following:

- 7% cost of living adjustment for 08 and 5% for 09. This funding will be used to fund wage and benefit increases within the Not-for-Profit Community in order to attract and retain high quality Direct Care Professionals, Social Workers, Medical Staff, Program Supervisors, and Administrative Staff, etc.
- Provide annualized support to address higher energy and insurance costs
- Initiate a major Commission on Nonprofit Provider funding to develop long term strategy to address the funding crisis
- Work with the State Contracting Standards Board and General Assembly for equitable and ethical contracting polices and standards.

Thank you for your assistance and attention to this matter.

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