

Testimony before Human Services Committee On

RB 7279: An Act Concerning the Administration of the Money Follows the Person Program

Quincy Abbot

Arc/CT

Sen. Harris, Rep. Villano, members of the Committee, good morning. I am Quincy Abbot of West Hartford, parent of a daughter with intellectual disabilities, what used to be called mental retardation, a member of the Steering Committee for the Nursing Facilities Transition Grant, which prepared the way for the Money Follows the Person Program, as well as an active participant on the Long Term Care Advisory Council. Today, I am speaking on behalf of Arc/CT.

The Money Follows the Person program (MFP) is consistent with the 2007 Long Term Care Plan goal to rebalance the system such that 75% of individuals with long term care needs are served in their homes in communities rather than in Intermediate Care Facilities for persons with Mental Retardation (ICF's-MR) or other institutions. Connecticut's experience over many years with individuals with intellectual disabilities – many also had physical or psychiatric disabilities - moving out of places such as Mansfield Training School and other institutions clearly proves that individuals with a wide range of disabilities and of all ages can transition successfully from nursing homes, ICF's-MR and other institutions into the community.

Universally the individuals enjoy an improved quality of life. Furthermore, average Medicaid dollars paid for each person by the state and federal governments average lower. This is a win-win situation, if one ever existed. It is better for the individuals and it is better for the federal and state budgets.

It is important that within the state budgeting system the money also follow the person. Ideally, when a person transitions under MFP, the dollars previously spent on the individual in the institution will transfer from the institution's budget line to the budget line of the agency providing the community supports under a Medicaid Waiver. Any savings from lower costs in the community can then be used to provide services to individuals on waiting lists in the community. It is important that the caps on numbers of individuals under the various waivers allow for such transfers.

We are pleased that at least 10% of the 700 persons transitioning under the Money Follows the Person grant will be those with intellectual disabilities. We urge that these be selected from the larger ICF's-MR where the individual residents have a lesser opportunity today to experience community life.

Arc/CT urges approval of Raised Bill 7259. Furthermore, it urges that the legislature provide the necessary community supports and services. This will enable 700 Connecticut individuals with disabilities to return to life in their communities where they want to be.