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Testimony February 20, 2007

**SB #886 AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENTS BY THE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO  
RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES**

I am here today to advocate for the inclusion of individuals with limitations to receive services in residential care facilities.

I am a grandmother of a child who has had accommodation in the public school arena since infancy. It is inconceivable that she no longer qualifies for the mandated support services she received because she reached an arbitrary benchmark.

My 21-year-old granddaughter wants to be gainfully employed. However, her medically documented limitations prevent her from entering the workforce without a safety net. On her own she has been unsuccessful in obtaining long-term employment.

My granddaughter recently was a resident at Vista's Vocational and Residential Center in Westbrook for five days. Vista staff compiled a comprehensive and positive evaluation for her entry into their 3-year vocational and residential program. This is the opportunity she needs for continued assessment of skills and assistance with training for appropriate job placement.

I am an educator. Over the past 15 years I have witnessed an increase in the number of students who require accommodation; current statistic is 1 in every 150. With this data in mind, it is imperative that the Department of Social Services management team implement a pragmatic plan to realistically and thoughtfully include individuals with limitations into a long-term setting where each can enjoy the emotional and social benefit of contributing to their own financial well-being.

I am a taxpayer who is acutely aware that it is less expensive to provide for support services than it is to pay the price of incarceration when an individual is excluded from receiving the help needed to be a functional member of the community.

My granddaughter and others who have documented limitations need legislation passed and funded for their inclusion into suitable residential facilities that will allow them the dignity of a purposeful life.