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Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 866

Dear legislators, Commissioners and employees of DSS

Hello, my name is Susan Sullivan. I am the mother of a 21 year old daughter, Nicole. Nicole has had uncontrolled seizures about 30 a day since birth. She had brain surgery in 9th grade and had part of her frontal lobe removed. This did not stop her seizures. Again, she had brain surgery in 11th grade to remove her entire right temporal lobe removed. She has been in special education in the school system. She graduated from Grasso Tech in 2005. Nicole was connected to the DSS office of Bureau of Rehabilitation Services in New London. I had never applied for Medicaid for her because she was able to stay on our health insurance due to her disability. I was under the impression she would get better and her intellectual and social issues would go away with time. Her current IQ testing reveals an IQ of 73. She is not mentally retarded. This is not a blessing in the current state of assistance programs. If she were mentally retarded she would get DMR services, a group home and a safety net. During the past year we have had all sorts of issues socially, financially and vocationally. She has poor judgment and reckless behavior. She can be persuaded by anyone who will be her friend to do things she normally wouldn't do. For instance, she gave all of her money to a "boyfriend", and then when that wasn't enough she wrote a \$400 check out of my account because this boyfriend needed eyeglasses, That wasn't enough she wrote a \$60.00 check a couple of days later. Luckily, I caught on to this or it could have been devastating. When she was in high school, another boyfriend and his mother picked up Nicole and took her and her bank book to Dime savings bank and withdrew \$950.00, the boyfriend's mother told her to forge my name. These are the predators out there awaiting these naive, lower IQ people. She has been unable to hold a job; she was terminated as a housekeeper in a motel and as a utility cook at a casino. I then paid \$800 for her to attend CNA classes this summer. She worked in that position for 2 weeks before she was terminated. She is unable to pass the state licensing test. Nicole is neurologically impaired, it is not a disability that you can easily see, she looks relatively normal, she can drive (although I can't allow that because she goes to give her money away and other unacceptable behaviors), I have found many people who say "well she should know better", "Its because she doesn't want to". She has been plagued by prejudice towards her and her disability. Because of her neurological

impairment she does not understand how she is perceived by others. She does not respond to criticism appropriately. As I said her IQ is 73. It is not safe for anyone with an IQ of 73 to live on their own. I have found the perfect program for Nicole. It is a residential community based program that trains neurologically impaired young adults to function in all aspects of their life and it stresses a holistic approach to make these students employable and live independently. Since she is not DMR, she doesn't qualify for any of their services. The VISTA program is perfect for Nicole. The BRS department doesn't want to fund a residential program and the ABI waiver is only for in community (there goal is to prevent someone from being institutionalized). And therefore we cannot get funding from any source. My daughter, with appropriate intervention can and wants to become a productive adult. I feel investing her now would be cheaper than having her on welfare, pregnant, in jail or worse the victim of a crime. She is a good girl, she doesn't smoke, drink or do drugs, but without my constant interventions, she tends to gravitate towards less than savory people. Would you please assist me and the other people out there obtain some financial assistance as this program is \$4150 a month for 3 years. It is sad when I wish my daughter's IQ were lower so she would be eligible for more services. She needed help all through school, that need has not ended. In fact, it has escalated because of the safety issues.

Now, I can speak as a healthcare provider in a correctional facility of 17 years. I see the repercussions of doing nothing for this group of people, they end up in situations they are not capable of dealing with, they make poor decisions because of lack of executive functioning skills they get themselves arrested.(anything to make a friend or fit it in) Then the system starts to pull them in. They could get probation, not follow up and end up in jail again. These people have a medical disability! And they are punished for it instead of receiving support.

Please help; I don't want my daughter to be a victim.

Thank-you
Susan Sullivan



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