



M. Jodi Rell
Governor

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Peter H. O'Meara
Commissioner

Kathryn du Pree
Deputy Commissioner

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
TO THE
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
March 12, 2008**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. I am Vincent O'Connell, Chief of Fiscal and Administrative Services for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), formerly DMR. I am testifying in strong opposition to **Raised Bill No. 677 – An Act Concerning the Use of State Computers on Non-State Property** that would prohibit DDS employees from taking their state-issued laptop computers out of the office if the computers contained personal or confidential information. This bill's provisions would pose a significant hardship on the department's employees and on the consumers that they serve.

Currently, DDS has 552 laptop computers in use across the state. Approximately 300 of these are used by DDS case managers to help in direct service provision to the department's consumers. The balance of the laptops are used by our quality management personnel, emergency on-call and other managers, our IT staff, and training personnel. The delivery of services to our consumers has been improved by the efficiency a laptop's portability affords to our case managers. Many DDS consumers find it difficult or even impossible to access services by coming to a centrally located office. With a laptop computer, a case manager can have access to accurate and up-to-date client information while meeting with a consumer in his or her preferred location, be it in their home, a group home, or at their day program.

In conjunction with Governor Rell's recent laptop security initiative, DDS has embarked on a significant upgrade in security protection for all the department's laptop computers. This upgrade includes the use of secure web-based applications; the encryption of hard drive data on all the department's laptops, which prohibits unauthorized access to this data; and the "locking out" of all external drives on DDS laptops so that personal or confidential information cannot be copied to CDs, USB drives or other mobile data drives. Over the last two years, DDS has focused on its development of secure web-based applications and the technology to support these applications. This allows case managers and emergency on-call managers to have immediate access to consumer data and the supports and services they need.

In addition to the needs of case managers and other DDS personnel on a day-to-day basis, DDS laptops play a critical role in the department's Emergency Management Plan. In the event of an emergency, either a natural disaster or a man-made event, a client's personal, medical and contact information is readily available to emergency DDS staff should it be necessary to take immediate action to ensure the safety of a consumer.

The Department of Developmental Services welcomes the opportunity to discuss the issue of laptop security with the committee and this bill's potential effect on the department's mission to provide our consumers with supports and services in community-based settings. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.