

**Robert J. Cloonan**  
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February 26, 2008

State of Connecticut  
Committee on Human Services  
Public Hearing – February 26, 2008

**Re: Raised Bill 413 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY PROVIDER RESCUE FUND ACCOUNT AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES COMMISSION.**

Mr. Chairman, Senators, Representatives:

My name is Bob Cloonan and I live at 333 Cumberland Road in West Hartford. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share some thoughts. I am speaking in support of RAISED BILL 413 – otherwise known as “THE RESCUE FUND BILL”.

I was just recalling that I have been a visitor to the Capitol for 32 years. Originally, these trips were in my capacity as a Corporator and Advocate for The Connecticut Institute for the Blind – Oak Hill. I have a son, Peter, who is deaf-blind. As a young parent searching for any and all information that we could find to help Peter our family also became involved with HARC. This was a most fortunate because it would be a few years later that we would learn that our daughter, Anne, was also disabled with Prader-Willi Syndrome. PW, as it is sometimes called, is a complex genetic disorder with no known cause and no known cure. Anne is now served by HARC and has a wonderful supported employment position at HARC’s work activity center at Reid and Riege law firm in Hartford. She also lives in Hartford with the dedicated support of Residential Management Services. We are blessed to have these outstanding service organizations in the State of Connecticut and we are privileged to be members of the HARC, Oak Hill and RMS families.

I find it a bit strange to be speaking to my representatives about a “Rescue Bill” for these organizations. I even had to go and look up the meaning of the word “rescue” in my blue back. Noah says that it means to “free from danger”. The definition is certainly appropriate. Organizations such as HARC and CIB Oak Hill are in danger. They cannot survive much longer with 0% support. Their combined 170+ year track record of dedication and commitment to serving the disabled of Connecticut confirms that they deserve better.

Your past recognition and support of these exceptional service organizations has resulted in wonderful, loving care and opportunities for so many special young men and women. I am here today to thank you, Oak Hill, HARC, RMS and most important the people of Connecticut. Bill 413 confirms that in prioritizing your agenda for the coming year the most vulnerable of our citizens will continue to be included. The “Rescue Fund” will help to free from danger those service providers who mean so much to so many families.

I am most grateful to those who have taken the initiative to create Bill 413 and I ask that you, our legislators, now take the initiative to convince your fellow lawmakers to support it. Let’s make it happen!

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Most gratefully,

*Bob Cloonan*