

Human Services Committee Testimony

S.B. #413, “(Raised) An Act Establishing a Community Provider Rescue Fund Account and Community-Based Services Commission”.

February 26, 2008

Senator Harris and members of the Human Service Committee, I would like to introduce my Husband, Bill, Daughter, Heather, and Son, Sean. We are here to ask you to support the Community Provider Rescue Fund.

The State of Connecticut and Department of Developmental Services has established a system that could be wonderful for individuals with developmental disabilities. It is a system that promotes community based services. The issue is zero increases for community providers. Our biggest fear as parents is that this system will go into a crisis and what will happen to our children when this occurs? How long can agencies provide quality services with no increases? The staffs that are working with Heather and Sean at this time are good people. They care and have gotten to know them.

I talk with Heather every night and on those times when there have been staff changes she asks me this question “Who will be here tonight?” It makes me feel so sad and I could just get in my car and go see her. And I do!!

Sean is a young man with a seizure disorder, severe developmental disabilities, legally blind and requires assistance to walk. He has a great deal of difficulty with staff changes. It takes a great deal of time for the staff to get to know him; what he likes/dislikes, how to provide the appropriate supports, when he is happy or unhappy. Imagine being Sean and having a different person giving you a shower, taking care of your very personal needs and not knowing if they will do it the same way as the last person. Bill or I will go to see Sean every night. He can not talk to me on the telephone as he is non-verbal and so I depend on the staff to be sure is doing o.k.

If this system fails, **or we are not here**, who will advocate for our children? Will we have to bring them back home because there is not enough staff to provide proper services? We are growing older and even though Heather and Sean come home to stay one night each weekend we will not always be able to do this.

It is time to make the commitment to families and their children and properly fund Connecticut Agencies once and for all. Please make this happen.

Thank you for listening.

Mr. and Mrs. William Bouffard
Heather and Sean Bouffard