

Appropriations Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
February 26, 2008

**Raised S.B. No. 413 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY PROVIDER  
RESCUE FUND ACCOUNT AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES  
COMMISSION.**

My name is Patti Silva and I am the chair of the State of Connecticut Council on Mental Retardation. We are a state-wide group of parents and advocates whose duty it is per C.G.S. Sec. 17a-270: "to recommend to the Governor and to the General Assembly such legislation as will in its judgment improve the care and training of mentally retarded persons."

With that task in mind, I am here today on behalf of the Council to request your support of Raised S.B. No. 413 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY PROVIDER RESCUE FUND ACCOUNT AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES COMMISSION.

Approximately 500,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities, mental illness and substance abuse disorders rely on private provider agencies to serve their varied and complex needs. Unfortunately due to two decades of chronic under-funding, the safety and well-being of Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens are at risk.

The current budget provides for a 0% funding increase for private providers next year.

Over the past 20 years, the consumer price index has increased 4.4% per year, which translates to an aggregate of 88%. During that same 20 year period, nonprofit providers have received an average annual cost of living adjustment of 1.4%, or an aggregate of 28%. That 60% makes a huge difference in the lives of the individuals served under a system lacking proper funding.

Private sector employees earn approximately 53% less than State employees performing the same jobs. The wage disparity inevitably leads to high staff turnover and vacancy rates. As a result of the high turnover and vacancy rates, quality of care and attention to safety deteriorate. Please do not allow this trend to continue its downward spiral. Our loved ones being served by this broken system, along with their families, deserve better.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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