



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
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 26, 2008**

Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the Human Services Committee. I am James P. Welsh, DDS's Director of Legal and Government Affairs and on behalf of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), formerly DMR, I am submitting written testimony regarding **Raised Bill No. 417, An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Fatality Review Board.**

Executive Order 25 (under Governor Rowland) created a Fatality Review Board (FRB) whose purpose is to investigate the circumstances surrounding the untimely deaths of persons with disabilities, including clients under the care of the Department of Developmental Services. DDS believes that the FRB serves an important purpose and function. The FRB process outlined in this bill is already generally established in practice. DDS supports the codification of the FRB process into statute as requested by the Office of Protection and Advocacy. However, we request the right to suggest minor technical changes if further review warrants it for the purpose of consistency with the established process.

Although we support this process being established in statute, we do have a concern regarding the change in appointment authority. Five members of the FRB are currently appointed by the Governor per Executive Order 25. SB 417 not only expands the membership of the Board, but also takes away the Governor's appointing authority for all but one member of the FRB and the Executive Director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy. **DDS requests that if the membership is expanded, the Governor should maintain her appointment authority provided by Executive Order 25.**

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit written testimony on this bill. You may contact Christine Pollio, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at 418-6066 with any questions.