



CT Association of Centers for Independent Living  
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*Testimony of Gary E Waterhouse, Executive Director  
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**SENATE BILL NO. 34 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS.**

The Connecticut Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL) and the State Independent Living Council (SILC) remain gravely concerned about the reduction in funding for Centers for Independent Living (CILs). State funding to CILs has in the period 2001-2008 decreased **-12.86%** while the Consumer Price Index has increased **19.02%** leaving a funding gap of 31.88%. The Proposed State Budget submitted to the Legislature recommends no increase in the DSS budget line for CILs. Center's must have the capacity to provide the programs and services relied on by the Disability Community.

The organizational capacity and strategic viability of CILs continue to be significantly impacted by flat funding and a rising consumer price index. These reductions have taken place despite the following:

- CT DSS plans to transition 700 people from nursing facilities to the community utilizing CIL staff and facilities.
- CT DMHAS plans to transition 230 individuals with Psychiatric disabilities to the community. CT DSS is developing Aging & Disability Resource Centers employing a no wrong door approach to information & referral using CIL Staff and facilities.
- The CT employment rate of working-age people with disabilities was 42.3 percent, compared to 76.9 percent for working-age people without disabilities leaving a gap of 34.6 percent. CILs prepare people for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The trend toward reducing reliance on institutions and assisting people with transitioning to the community will require more Independent Living Skills training to be performed by CIL staff.
- Five (5) CILs service the entire state leaving some urban and many rural communities underserved.

**Reduced financial support has caused:**

- Staff downsizing causing reduced capacity.
- High staff turnover rates due to low pay and few employee benefits.
- Reductions in long term full time staff members to part time.
- No pay raises for some CIL staff for as long as four (4) years.
- Expanded work responsibilities and job descriptions.
- Delays in providing services to consumers due to limited staff hours.

**RECOMMENDATION: Increase by \$500,000 funding under the Department of Social Services Independent Living budget line in the appropriations bill.**