

Testimony of Susan Zimmerman
Monday March 16, 2009
Before the
Government Administration and Elections Committee

Rep Slossberg, Senator Spallone and Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

I am writing today to urge you to remove the Family Support Council from H. B. 6375 An Act Concerning Review and Termination of Certain Boards and Commissions. The Family Support Council established under section 17a-219c of the General Statutes is an agency with which I have great familiarity having served as its staff support from 2000-2004. The Council first established in 1995 is an interagency and family collaboration model, which has been successfully used by other advisory boards throughout the state. Through the monthly Council meetings agencies and families have shared information about service delivery and identified service gaps. Further, the Council has sponsored successful conversations with families and legislators.

With the support of federal funding, the Council developed in 2000 a Family Support Network (FSN). FSN has been an essential support for families who have a child with a disability. FSN connects parents with education and social service supports using a peer-to-peer model. The outcome for families is improved through this low cost service and eliminating it would increase the burden on social service agencies.

Families are best served when knowledgeable parents share information and the Family Support Council has demonstrated its success in achieving this mission.

I also urge you to consider removing the Commission on Children from this bill. The work of the Commission is well known and I do not need to repeat it here. Families benefit from this work and its elimination would be a loss to the community of families including those raising children with disabilities.

I realize that members of this Committee are faced with difficult choices. I can only repeat that the Family Support Council is an effective, low cost way to support families when they have a child with a disability.

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