

**Testimony of Paula LaPorte
Public Hearing of the Appropriations Committee
February 20, 2009**

Good afternoon, distinguished members of the Committee and thank you for this opportunity to speak up for funding public services for Connecticut citizens like my son.

My son has been living at the Hartford Regional Center, which is operated by DDS in Newington, for seven years. He is medically fragile and requires a 1:1 to meet his wants and needs.

The care that he receives from nursing to the staff who work and care for him is exceptional. All because of the years of experience in public service that they have.

I'm a nurse myself, and if you should privatize, continuity of care would be lost. High turnover rate of people caring for the clients would be an issue, due to lack of experience, patient and knowledge of what it takes. An increase in abuse could occur; skin integrity and emotional support would be lost.

Most of these clients cannot speak for themselves to fight for their rights. And the only advocates for these clients besides family are the state workers who have been caring for them for years.

To take that continuity away from them would be catastrophic. Please don't privatize state services for the developmentally disabled. My son and thousands of other people's children need those services desperately.

Thank you.