



Advocates for people with intellectual disabilities
and related developmental disabilities

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Testimony before Committee on Appropriations
Re: H.B. 6365, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium
Ending June 30, 2011, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

by

Lynn Warner, Executive Director/The Arc of Connecticut

Good morning Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and Members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Lynn Warner the Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 57-year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We have 23 local chapters that provide supports, services, and advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities throughout Connecticut.

I am here today to testify regarding **House Bill #6365, "An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2011, and Making Appropriations Therefor"**, as it directly impacts the network of Private Providers in Connecticut and more importantly, all the individuals and families that they serve. For years the private providers have served these individuals with dignity and quality and yet for years private providers have been consistently under-funded. In addition, they have been continuously subjected to unfunded mandates, lack of adequate cost of living increases and extensive rate changes.

Today, Private Providers are barely being funded enough to provide for health and safety needs of individuals, and we do not consider that is an appropriate quality of life for the people in their care.

Our concerns are not new. As advocates – representatives of our Association have been contacting the changing administrations in the Governor's office and coming before different Legislative Committees for over 20 years, describing the predicaments of individuals with disabilities and families and how important supports and services are to all of them. *And today is no different.*

The Arc/Connecticut, Inc. Member Chapters: Futures, Inc., Middletown / Greater Enfield Arc / Family Options, Watertown / Arc of Farmington Valley / Friends of New Milford, Inc. / Litchfield County Arc / LOV-Arc, Westbrook / MARC, Inc., Manchester / MARC: Community Resources, Portland / Arc of Meriden-Wallingford / Arc of Greater New Haven / Arc/New London County / Options, Unlimited / Arc of Plainville / Arc of Quinebaug Valley / SARAH Inc., Gulford / SARAH Seneca Residential Services / SARAH Tuxis Residential Services / STAR, Norwalk / Arc of Southington / Tri County Arc, Columbia / Waterbury Arc / WeCAHR, Danbury

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While the Governor's Proposed Budget does not ask for recessions from the Department of Developmental Services – it does freeze room and board rates for group homes and the rates of ICF/MRs that provide services for people with intellectual disabilities in the Department of Social Services' Budget.

Additionally, there is also no new funding for the Waiting List Settlement Agreement to continue addressing the needs of the over 2,000 individuals waiting for services on the DDS Waiting and Planning Lists. The official oversight of this Agreement will end on June 30, 2009, and we are deeply concerned of what will happen to those left waiting.

The Governor's Budget also appears to have some understanding that case loads and the need for services will continue to grow – but as proposed – it is still is a long way off from providing any real help or acknowledging that adequate funding is needed in order for these vital services to continue to operate.

Maintaining what the Private Providers currently have is a very good start, but we urge you to legislate adequate funding in order for the Private Providers to remain a viable and efficient option for care – *especially* in a time when Human Services' supports will be needed more than ever. Otherwise, it is simply an injustice to people of Connecticut with intellectual disabilities, their families, and people who support them.

Please make no mistake, the Private Providers can do this very challenging work – and can do it more efficiently, **BUT they can not do it for nothing.**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.