

Good afternoon: My name is Gerald Guay I live in Branford Ct. I'm here today to testify how important it is to me and my family and other families who are affected by this proposal to privatize group homes in Ct.

My son Keith Guay 38 yrs. old has been a client of DDS for more than 25 yrs. He was born with multiple handicaps including cleft lip blindness and deafness. He can see and hear with aids (glasses, hearing aids, signing and lip reading).

He has violent tendencies and can be destructive to the environment and to himself at times. This was the main reason why we could no longer handle him in our home situation. He had two older sisters whose lives were affected. He was placed in the system at an early age at a local regional center and from there he was placed in various homes until presently at Little Meadow rd in Guilford. Keith was educated at the ACES program until the age of 21 yrs and placed in a work program at KUHN.

Over the years he developed close ties to the permanent state staff. His behavioral patterns became consistent and very predictable, sometimes seasonal and sometimes spur of the moment but usually violent and destructive behaviors. The one element that affected him most is change in the environment or staff departures. His behaviors increased in those periods. This is not uncommon among clients of DMR. Over the years the relationships that were formed with staff and families have resulted in the most stable and livable conditions that we as parents could ask for.

Recently we were told that my son's home is one of a few that are being privatized. I attended a meeting explaining the process that's going to be administered. We were told that private companies would bid on each group home. They made everything sound so simple with each step of the process. At the end I felt a whitewashing had occurred. The private company would administer houses with lower paid staff, many without benefits. As a reasonable assumption I would think that that would lead to a

larger job turnover as compared to DMR worker. It would seem to me that that would create a much better environment for my son's livability to retain the current staff.

As I stated before change affects clients like my son; this move would definitely cause an uproar that I can't even imagine. In a short period of time he would lose every relationship that took years to develop with the staff that's been there for years. I'm asking you to put yourself in Keith's mind and try to imagine what you would think if your world has just collapsed. Thank you for your time to listen to me.