



February 28, 2009

To: LABOR COMMITTEE

Re: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STANDARD WAGE BILL

**Easter Seals
Employment Industries**
122 Avenue of Industry
Waterbury, CT 06705

**All Kids
Child Care Center**
22 Tompkins Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

128 Avenue of Industry
Waterbury, CT 06705

**Easter Seals Center
for Better Hearing**
22 Tompkins Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

Heritage Village
Professional Bldg.
Southbury, CT 06488

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I am the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center of Greater Waterbury Inc. The vocational rehabilitation division of our organization supports five-hundred (500) individuals with disabilities in securing and maintaining employment each year.

A significant component of our employment program services involves janitorial cleaning work opportunities afforded through the state's Preferred Purchasing Program statute. Presently, we have ninety (90) individuals with disabilities earning a living wage through this program. It continues to create 'real jobs' for persons with disabilities, and has continued to do so over the twenty plus years of our involvement with the program

Please do not underestimate or fail to realize the enormous role that the preferred purchasing program plays in providing employment for the many hundreds of disabled individuals in our state. It is a thriving and viable program that is making a substantially positive impact on workers with disabilities. In many cases, it is the solitary lifeline and basic means of sustenance for workers with disabilities. Accordingly, the disabled workers provide significant service to the state of Connecticut, each and every day, and make up a solid base as contributing taxpayers.

Furthermore, I want to express my deep concern about the worker retention language, and how it contradicts the pilot program language, unfairly halting the ability of CCPA and the many private disability organizations to gain employment for people with disabilities at standard wages, by requiring providers to retain existing workers and thereby fall out of compliance with the requirement that providers use workers with disabilities on the contract.

Again, this legislation must include language that affords employment opportunities for the many persons with disabilities who are current and potential future workers. Persons with disabilities must be included in the overall language of the CCPA Preferred Purchasing Program.

I am confident that your committee will do its due diligence in assuring that large numbers of persons with disabilities are not excluded from the language of this legislation. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ron Fleury

Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center of Greater Waterbury Inc

Easter Seals Employment Industries

122 Avenue of Industry • Waterbury, CT 06705

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