



Advocates for people with intellectual disabilities and related developmental disabilities

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**Testimony before The Human Services Committee**

**SB 282 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ATTENDANCE-BASED RATE SYSTEM BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

by

**Leslie Simoes, Assistant Executive Director/The Arc of Connecticut**

Good morning Senator Doyle, Representative Walker, and Members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Leslie Simoes and I am the Assistant Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 58-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 this morning to testify in favor of two bills:

**SB 282 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ATTENDANCE-BASED RATE SYSTEM BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.**

**HB 5245 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE PRIVATIZATION OF GROUP HOMES.**

The first bill, **SB 282**, would prohibit the Department of Developmental Services from implementing an attendance-based, fee for service reimbursement system until the advisory committee, as directed in legislation specifically in section 57 of public act 09-3 of the September 2009 special session, reports back to the legislature.

This change to the DDS reimbursement system comes at a high price to individuals with intellectual disabilities, their families, and the private providers who support them. It will potentially have negative consequences for a variety of reasons; most importantly people needing supports and services might be denied. The already fragile private provider system in Connecticut will need to take a closer look at their services and supports to determine who and how they will be able to care

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for those in need while still maintaining the highest level of quality of care.

Administratively, the cost of doing business continues to rise with health insurance, oil and fuel prices, liability insurance, and worker's compensation costs spiraling upwards and adding to the strain of budgets already spread too thin. With no COLA – and now the implementation of a rate setting process that has not been studied – there is no question that agencies will be forced to cut services or even close programs...and where would that leave the people entrusted in their care?

The disturbing and unsettling fact is DDS's disregard for the legislation passed and implemented this change anyway is lessened only in part by introduction of this bill. The Arc respectfully asks this committee to vote favorably on SB 282 in order for DDS to cease and desist the implementation of the attendance based, fee for service reimbursement system and the work of the advisory committee can continue.

The second bill, **HB 5245 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE PRIVATIZATION OF GROUP HOMES** would effectively study private group home operations including resident population, level of care required, staffing ratios, wages and benefits, operating costs and state labor contracts.

The state of Connecticut needs to look closely at how it does business and how to provide services more effectively. The Arc of Connecticut supports this concept but cautions not to compare public and private group home operations with judgment or competition but rather with open eyes focused on making the system better for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you today.