



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
60B WESTON STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06120-1551

JAMES D. McGAUGHEY  
Executive Director

Phone: 1/860-297-4307  
Confidential Fax: 1/860-297-4305

## Testimony of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities Before the Appropriations Committee

Submitted by: James D. McGaughey  
Executive Director  
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Thank you for this opportunity to present information about the anticipated deficit for our agency's Personal Services account. The deficit amount is projected to be \$65,101.

According to the DAS Business Office, which provides business services to our agency, the amount originally appropriated for our Personal Services for this fiscal year would have been sufficient to meet all projected PS expenses. However, as you know, the overall State budget required additional savings, resulting in reductions in the amounts that were actually allocated to all agencies. Response to the retirement incentive program helped many agencies to live with those reduced allocations. However, at OPA no one retired. As a result, we have an uncontrollable shortfall in the account. We anticipate using the holdback to cover this shortfall.

I should point out that we have done what we can to achieve savings in PS through the Voluntary Leave program, and by delaying refill of a critically needed nurse investigator position, and of course, unpaid furlough days. As of the last payroll, we have achieved just in excess of \$50,000 in PS savings this year. We have also absorbed the full amount of hold-back/savings imposed on our Other Expense account, even though that has meant a reduction in funding for contracts with community providers of legal and advocacy services. There are no other cuts possible: over the past ten years, OPA has lost ten program positions, including front line and supervisory case advocacy positions, management, outreach, support and communications positions, as well as losing our three-person business and personnel unit to consolidation. On the federal side of our budget, largely due to increasing salary and fringe benefit expenses, we have lost a lawyer position and are not currently seeking to refill another vacant position. The cumulative effect of these reductions has been a significant loss of capacity to respond to constituent needs, to produce self-help and other educational publications, to conduct training, to support community-based advocacy, and to efficiently manage ourselves. The current economic downturn has increased demand for our services, and our people are working hard and responding with creativity. But I hope you will appreciate that, if we are to fulfill our mandates, there are limits to what we can achieve in the way of savings.

Thank you for your attention. If there are any questions, I will try to answer them.