



THE KENNEDY CENTER, INC.
Celebrating the Potential of All People

Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Committee

**S.B. No. 355 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
REQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.**

Submitted By: Peter Carbine, Vice President of Residential Services, The Kennedy Center, Inc.

Public Hearing Date: March 5, 2010

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this important legislative initiative.

Description: The Kennedy Center is a CARF accredited agency, which provides a wide range of services to children and adults who primarily live in the Greater Bridgeport area. We are among the 530+ member agencies of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits.)

We strongly urge support of the concepts raised in S.B. No. 355, with additional recommendations to enhance the outcome as a long-term solution, by utilizing the rate freeze exemption on an ongoing basis, beyond the recommended two-year period, or completely removing the Rate Cap from the process.

Presently, there is a freeze on room and board rates, scheduled to remain in place through the fiscal years ending June 30, 2010 and June 30, 2011. Prior to this damaging rate freeze, there has been a 2% rate cap in place for several years (beginning with June 30th rates for 2007) to prevent Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) for individuals with intellectual disabilities, from receiving a Room & Board rate that is more than two per cent greater than the rate in effect for the facility (in accordance with section 17b-244(a.) The practice of under-funding the true cost of services has had a detrimental impact upon the provider network, as they continue to struggle with ever-increasing demands and unfunded mandates imposed upon this vitally important system of care.

The proposed legislation would exempt desperately needed capital improvements, which are required by the Department of Developmental Services, from the current rate freeze.

Funding which will provide for urgently necessary repairs, are not only an extremely sound investment in these facilities from a fiscal standpoint, but also a significant investment in the future safety and well being of the individuals with developmental disabilities served by the DDS funded, nonprofit provider network.

With the current rate cap in place, The Kennedy Center has been faced in the untenable position of postponing much needed preventative maintenance on our 14 group homes. Residential Services has been providing group home living for over 30 years. Consequently, we have many homes that require ongoing maintenance and improvements. When we perform capital improvements such as replacing a roof or furnace, the cost of these items will not be reimbursed to the agency due to the rate cap. This creates a great financial hardship on this agency. Our clients deserve to live in a safe environment. We urge your support of Bill No. 355 so that we can fulfill our commitment to our clients and neighbors.



With regard to additional challenges faced by DDS funded providers, it is important to note that included within the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) budget, are the following, anticipated savings: 'Reduce the Employment and Day Services account by \$5,946,000 to reflect the annualization of the new attendance-based reimbursement system begun in Spring 2010 pursuant to FY 10 rescissions.'

Numerous Consumers and Nonprofit Providers have previously testified before the Appropriations Committee in opposition to both the timing and process, with which DDS would implement a complete overhaul of the reimbursement system which supports the very network of providers who 'partner' with the State on a daily basis to fulfill the mission of the Department. Few changes have impacted the provider network as dramatically as the overarching systems changes at hand, during the most fiscally challenging times that the State – and the Nation have experienced.

Therefore, the additional burden of a rate freeze at this time is particularly damaging and counter-productive for the State.

In closing, once again, I urge you to support

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With additional recommendations as stated within this testimony.

I would also encourage you to contact providers within your local communities. The ability of the state to adequately meet the needs of its residents is greatly dependent upon the ability of the Nonprofit Provider Community to sustain a vibrant network, which will continue to serve as the ultimate safety net for Connecticut's citizens at risk.

*I thank you for your time and consideration of these critically important issues.
Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information:*

Contact information: Pcarbine@kennedyctr.org or (203) 365-8522, Ext. 204.