

Testimony of Katherine A. Carver

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State of Connecticut

Appropriations Committee Hearing, 3.4.2011

Honorable Senator Toni Harp and Senator Patricia Dillon, other distinguished Members of the Committee.

The Independence Unlimited Board of Directors on behalf of our Consumers with disabilities is grateful for your consideration. In today's world, the words thankful, grateful, and appreciation are not used enough. We appreciate the struggles you and your committee endured formulating what continued level of funding various programs would receive. We are more than willing to work with you and Governor Malloy with the 15% cut put forth in the current 2011-2013 budget. It would be problematic for additional cuts as our funds were cut by Governor Rell in 2010.

Last year we were here to apprise you of our accomplishments and how important it is to release people from the confines of nursing homes so as to bloom in their community of choice. In Independent Living, it is critical that each Consumer drives their process. Unfortunately, we have other important critical matters that could impact funding for IU and our 4 other sister Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

One impact concerns the current funding mechanisms for Part B which currently comes through the State and Part C that comes directly from the

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Federal government and replacing them with new Grants for Independent Living Program. The proposal claims that the consolidated program would provide **formula grants** to states to support the provision of independent living services through CILs and hold the states accountable. This could have a negative impact for Connecticut Centers. Direct funding is currently required under the Rehabilitation Act. Part B and C dollars are considered **core** funding that supports the CILs and provides infrastructure for other programs such as Money Follows the Person. (This last year, IU was the most successful CIL with a high number of nursing home transitions). Maintaining direct funding of Part C dollars **ensures** that the CILs can remain operating while waiting for the state contracts to be implemented or payment made. Funneling all monies through the state could put some CT CILs in danger of temporarily closing while waiting for contracts and/or funding. Or it could close off funding as there is no requirement that a specific portion of funding go to the CILs.

Another impact is CT CILs are also mandated to be community-based. The services beyond the mandated core services are to be consumer and community responsive. Direct funding for the Part C monies provides a mechanism for this to happen. If all funding is funneled through the state, the CILs could lose their ability to be community responsive because the state may impose directives on how the money can be spent and require all CILs to follow a state initiative rather than respond to the needs of their individual communities.

CILs have a significant role in the rebalancing from institutions to home and community based services. Funding changes, cuts or delays will negatively impact the capacity of the CILs to fulfill their role of providing core services and more importantly, it strips the Consumer of their participation and direction of how they want to bloom.