



Advocates for people with intellectual disabilities
and related developmental disabilities

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Executive Director
Lynn C. Warner

Testimony before the Committee of Government Administration and Elections:

S.B. #1059 (Raised), "An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes"

**By
Lynn C. Warner, Executive Director/The Arc of Connecticut**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin, and Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

I am Lynn Warner, Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 59 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 and related developmental disabilities throughout Connecticut.

I am here today to testify in support of specific sections of **S.B. 1059, "An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes"** and more specifically, to sections 20, 23, and 294 and as they pertain to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the people they support and serve.

The Arc of Connecticut's mission is to promote opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities for *full inclusion* in the life of their communities and not to be segregated behind walls or up on hills. Therefore, The Arc of Connecticut is particularly interested in Section 20, as it pertains to the development of a plan to deinstitutionalize the residents of Southbury Training School (STS).

As members of this Committee may already be aware, this plan would reinforce our Settlement Agreement reached with DDS and signed by the Court in November 2010. The Agreement addresses how interdisciplinary teams at STS will assess each resident's needs and make a professional judgment and recommendation for that person regarding the most integrated

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setting appropriate to the individual's needs. The Court ruled that STS is not an integrated setting. The Settlement is the outcome of our longstanding litigation involving DDS and regarding the institution. We have no doubt, that done *individually, plan-fully and thoughtfully*, every resident in STS could live successfully in the community. The Arc of Connecticut supports the considerations of the plan and believes it should be developed using a cost-benefit analysis that considers both financial costs as well as quality of care issues.

In regards to Section 23, The Arc of Connecticut would support a plan for the consolidation of the specific positions and roles outlined in S.B. 1059 to achieve a reduction in state costs – provided the quality and level of care for the individuals dependent on services and supports *does not* suffer. The need for services is at an all time high, and if positions get eliminated that would pull care away from the individuals' dependent upon that care as a “cost of doing business” or “shared sacrifice” outcome, this would be in nobody's best interest or worth a penny of savings. Yes, these State Agencies are businesses, but let us not forget why they came into existence in the first place – to care and protect people – usually very vulnerable people.

With respect to Section 294, The Arc of Connecticut would support an evaluation that would examine the purchase of service contracts for Public Health, DDS, DCF, DSS, and DMHAS and devise a system to consolidate the process in order for private providers to lessen their contracting burdens. By streamlining this process, it would not only save precious resources of time and money, but more importantly, allow private providers to focus more energy on the quality supports and services they provide to the individuals entrusted in their care every day.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on these specific sections of S.B. 1059, and I urge this Committee to vote favorably on them.