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Good afternoon Chairs and Committee Members. My name is Melinda Montovani and I have the privilege of working at the Brain Injury Association of CT where we serve the entire state of CT.

I support Bill No SB 297: AN ACT CONCERNING AN AMENDMENT TO THE MEDICAID STATE PLAN UNDER SECTION 1915I OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT TO PROVIDE HOME CARE SERVICES.

I testified last week in regard to the number of people living in unsafe situations because they are on a wait list and may not be able to access home and community services for years. But it is not just people with brain injuries. There are wait lists on the Personal Care Assistant Waiver, the DDS Waiver, and the Katie Beckett Waiver. Unless someone goes into an institution for 3 months and can enter the system through the Money follow the Person door, there is little hope of getting the services they need to live safely and independently in a timely manner.

MFP has created an incentive to go to an institution. By opening up 5200 slots under MFP, and not addressing any of the wait lists, it is not too difficult for people to figure out their best chances of getting homecare, is by going into an institution.

By adopting this 1915(i) it will give people access to necessary services, while at the same time eliminate the incentive for people to become institutionalized.

I am in favor of this proposal as it is based on needs and functional eligibility versus dividing people by diagnosis and fostering a system where people with certain diagnosis are left to fight for scraps. All people with disabilities deserve to live independently in the community; and there should be equal access to services based on need, not diagnosis.

Governor Malloy indicated that his budget protects the most vulnerable CT residents. Yet he really addresses the needs of only 2 segments of the population of persons with disabilities. He pledges to support people with autism and people with mental illness and addiction. He does not even mention other groups of people with disabilities. Just because they are not on his radar, does not mean they are not there and that they are not in need of support.

Supporting the 1915 (i) supports all persons with disabilities as it is based on functioning, and helps to break down the silo's that Governor Malloy is creating.

From the Governor's transition policy on health care stated, "In the end, if we are to succeed in providing the kind of access to health care that citizens and employers in every other industrialized county enjoy, we need leadership at the state level to do its part in the equation."

We need leadership at the State level to support all persons with disabilities being able to live safely and independently in the community by being able to access home and community based services. Please support SB 297. Thank you.