



February 7, 2011

Testimony before Committee on Planning and Development:

H.B. #5142 (Raised), "An Act Requiring Public Hearings on the Location of Group Homes

H.B. #5259 (Raised), "An Act Requiring Public Hearings on the Location of Group Homes

by

Lynn Warner, Executive Director/The Arc of Connecticut

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, and Members of the Planning and Development 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 disabilities throughout Connecticut.

The Arc of Connecticut is here today to testify strongly against both **House Bills #5142 and #5259**, Acts that Require Public Hearings on the Location of Group Homes, as these Raised Bills jeopardize both the confidentiality and safety of some of the most vulnerable citizens with intellectual disabilities in Connecticut.

Both H.B. 5142 and H.B. 5259 would be in direct opposition to the long established Federal and State legal rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities regarding their decision to live where they choose. The protection of these rights include Section 8-3e of the Connecticut Statutes which states in part that no zoning regulations shall treat any community residence that houses six or fewer individuals with intellectual disabilities and necessary staff persons and that is licensed under the provisions of 17a-227; which is the statute for licensing with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) differently from any single family residence.

Simply stated, people with intellectual disabilities are citizens and citizens of Connecticut do not have to go through Public Hearings to live in the communities of their choice. Relationships with one's community are usually initiated *after* a home has been established,