



**TUXIS RESIDENTIAL & COMMUNITY RESOURCES, INC.**

*Advocacy & Empowerment... One Person at a Time Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D., Executive Director*

Testimony Submitted to the Planning and Development Committee

**H.B. No. 5142 An Act Requiring Public Hearings on the location of group homes**  
**H.B. 5259 An Act Requiring Public Hearings on the location of group homes.**

(Opposed – written Only Testimony)

Submitted By: Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D.  
Public Hearing Date: February 7, 2011

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and Members of the Planning and Development Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to these potentially damaging pieces of legislation.

My name is Terrence Macy, Ph.D. I am the Executive Director of SARAH Tuxis Residential and Community resources, Inc., a community based agency that has been supporting persons with intellectual disabilities for 20 years. In my 40 year career I have also worked in another private agency and public service in Massachusetts, Ohio and Connecticut. The sum of this work informs me that bills, as proposed here, make for bad public policy and actually violate the constitutional rights of persons with intellectual disabilities. I have been in the field long enough to remember when deinstitutionalization efforts of Mansfield Training School were met with newly developed group homes being burned to the ground. I would hope that such prejudices and ignorance were no longer the case but fear they are not. If memory serves it was the destruction of those first homes that provoked the creation of Section 8-3e of the Connecticut General Statutes. As you know this statute prohibits zoning regulations from discriminating against persons with intellectual disabilities. These bills would also be in conflict with both the Americans with disabilities Act (ADA) and privacy regulations as outlined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA).

I also object to these two bills from my 13 years serving on the Madison Planning and Zoning Commission. From this experience I can state unequivocally that such bodies would not be able to conduct a review that would hold up under appeal. Neither would these volunteer review boards have the requisite skill sets to evaluate group home proposals. In fact, it is hard to imagine how this issue could be heard as it would be on the basis of emotional argument and not on a body of facts.

Imagine if you would, that your entrance into your prospective community would be subject to a public review by volunteers serving on a local Planning and Zoning commission based on their understanding of your nationality, or your level of education or income level or intelligence score. I can't imagine that. I also can't imagine that in Connecticut in 2011 we could even be considering legislation that would condemn persons with disabilities from living in their communities based on the fact that they have intellectual disabilities. This is the same concept

45 Boston Street, Guilford, Connecticut 06437

203-458-8532 Fax 203-453-7717

E-mail: [info@sarah-tuxis.org](mailto:info@sarah-tuxis.org) / Web page: [www.sarah-tuxis.org](http://www.sarah-tuxis.org)

A Chapter of the ARC Connecticut and ARC U.S.

that created horrific state institutions where people were "sent away" and sentenced for a lifetime of segregation for the sole reason that they were born with a disability.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts on this matter and I urge you to reject these discriminatory bills.