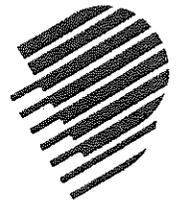


# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



### Testimony

#### Joint Committee on Aging

February 28, 2012

#### **IN FAVOR OF SB 138: An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study “Aging in Place”**

Good morning. My name is Molly Cole and I am the Executive Director of the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. The Council is a governor appointed council comprised of individuals with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, state agencies and interested providers. Our mission is to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities.

Aging in Place is a good approach to a serious concern as individuals with developmental disabilities age. These individuals run a high risk of not having appropriate planning and supports to age in their own homes and communities. Many individuals with developmental disabilities live with aging caregivers. As those individuals die or are no longer able to meet the demands of caring for a family member with a developmental disability, there is a significant risk that these individuals could be moved to group homes or other more restrictive options away from their own communities. The life expectancy and age-related medical conditions of adults with developmental disabilities are similar to that of the general population unless they have severe levels of cognitive impairment, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, or have multiple disabilities. The growing numbers of older adults with developmental disabilities will increase the need for services and supports that enable them to maintain functioning and continue living as independently as possible, whether they are living with family or in other settings. Examples of such services and supports include personal care services, assistive technologies, home health care, recreation and social opportunities in the community, and other supports.

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For the past two years the Council has funded a project to promote aging in place for people with developmental disabilities. Historically, these aging in place initiatives have not specifically included people with developmental disabilities. Our project, funded through WeCAHR in Danbury, is the first to promote this process through Age Plan of New York, for this population. The primary focus of the project is to demonstrate the ability to create a Naturally Occurring Living Community for aging persons with disabilities. WeCAHR is currently working with Age Plan, a consulting agency specializing in promoting successful aging, to create tools, assess the community, build on existing networks as well as create new networks, connecting with the aging networks and identifying individuals for the project to demonstrate the ability to create a NOLC. Part of the process includes WeCAHR's participation in the Village to Village Network. They have been the first agency in the country to raise the issue of including people with disabilities within the Village to Village Network.

The Council applauds and supports this bill, and urges the Committee to ensure that the voice of people with developmental disabilities is included within the aging in place task force as it is created.

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