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**Testimony of  
Marc Anthony Gallucci, Esq.  
Executive Director – Center for Disability Rights  
HB 5014 – Governor’s Adjustments – Centers for Independent Living**

**February 17, 2012**

Good Evening Senator Prague, Representative Abercrombie, Representative Villano and the other Members of the Committee:

I offer my testimony in opposition to the Governor’s \$273,000 or 50% cut in funding to Centers for Independent Living. I support the testimony of the others from our sister Centers, and I believe that they have explained well the good and critical work that we do. I do not intend to repeat that. I would, however, like to underscore some very important facts.

- 1) State funding for Centers for Independent Living started in 1988. The level of funding that year was \$725,000. Today CILs are budgeted for about \$175,000 less than we were in 1988. This despite the fact that State funding has grown from about 4 billion dollars per year in 1988 to almost 20 billion dollars today. We have never shared in the benefits of that increased funding; but we are always asked to share in the sacrifices when budget cuts are needed;
- 2) It is a fact, as evidenced by OPM and DSS figures, that Centers for Independent Living result in millions of dollars saved in Medicaid and other State provided services due to our work with folks with disabilities that promotes increased self –reliance and increased capacity for independent community based living. Yet, every year we have to come here and remind everyone of this? Why would anyone propose cutting the very programs that decrease reliance on expensive government programs?;

- 3) The State has legally designated Centers for Independent Living, along with the Agencies on aging as THE single point of entry to the State's long-term care system. We are diligently do the very best we can to transition people from nursing homes and divert others from having to go into nursing homes. While, we do get some funding from both the MFP and ADRC programs at my Center. This funding pays only for staff, and we need our CORE funding to house our MFP and ADRC staff and to provide equipment, supplies, utilities, mileage, and support staff. We have NEVER received any increase in CORE funding to do this; but in fact, have faced cut after cut.

I can't speak for our sister Centers, but if this proposed cut goes through, then we won't have the infrastructure to house the State's Single Point of Entry any longer; and,

- 4) Our Center is trying to cover most of New Haven County and all of Middlesex County. The State has never given us the funding to serve Middlesex County and the good citizens who live there have been basically second class citizens even though they pay taxes and have needs just like those in areas that are well served. Despite this, through fund raising and other very creative things we have done, we have managed in the last three years to make serious head way into Middlesex County. In fact, we had been looking at very small office spaces in Middletown and Old Saybrook. This proposed cut has already caused us to pull back our plans to serve this area better, and we have suspended our search for space.

In light of these facts, I request that you not only restore all our funding cuts, and reject this latest proposal, but that you also add to our line item so that we can properly do our job, and further save the State money.

Thank you for your attention.

Marc Anthony Gallucci, Esq.  
Center for Disability Rights