

February 17, 2012

Re: Testimony for the Appropriations Committee Public Hearing—Governor's Proposed
Midterm Budget Adjustments

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Walker:

Respectfully, I have significant concerns about the proposed cuts in state funding for Connecticut's Centers for Independent Living. I am a member of the Board of Directors for Independence Unlimited and serve as an ex officio member of the Connecticut State Independent Living Council. Therefore, I have first hand knowledge of the significant and important work that the Centers for Independent Living accomplish.

As I am sure you know, the Centers for Independent Living are funded to provide information and referral services for persons with disabilities on questions or needs related to living independently. Such services provide individuals with the guidance they need to make informed choices about living in the community, which is a basic civil right. The state's five centers have also been vital to the implementation of Money Follows the Person under CMS. Since the project's inception, center personnel have been instrumental in transitioning approximately 928 individuals from nursing facilities to living independently in their own homes in communities of their choosing. In turn, this has resulted in significant savings for Connecticut.

In sum, I urge you to level fund Connecticut's Centers for Independent Living so they can continue to pursue their mission of providing peer counseling, information and referral, and independent living skills training for Connecticut citizens with disabilities. I would be happy to meet with you to answer any questions or to provide you with additional information on the work of the centers.

Sincerest regards,
Diana J. LaRocco, Ed.D.
Department of Educational Leadership
Institute for Translational Research in Education, Nursing, and Health Professions
University of Hartford
Auerbach 223 B
200 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117
Voice: 860-768-5807
E-mail: dlarocco@hartford.edu