

February 16, 2012

Dear Governor Malloy, Senator Harp, Senator Prague, and Esteemed Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Please accept this written testimony, in opposition of the recent proposal to merge the Office of Protection and Advocacy with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

I have had a long-standing relationship with OPA; both personally and professionally. I am a parent of 23-year-old identical twin sons, diagnosed with autism and developmental disabilities. I have called on and utilized supports and services from OPA for many years. As good as I believed my advocacy skills were, it was only after receiving the support and representation from OPA, that my sons received the appropriate adult transition services they needed, from our local school district.

In my nearly 10 year tenure as the Northeast Regional Coordinator for the CT Family Support Network, I relied heavily on support from OPA in advising families raising children with disabilities, on all types of individual and systemic issues. I have additionally had the opportunity to sit at numerous roundtables and statewide committees with OPA, having a shared respect and consistent goal of supporting and promoting the service needs of this vulnerable population. For the past 2 years, I have worked professionally as a Family Care Coordinator, with Generations Family Health Center, in Danielson. I serve many clients as an Advocate in this role, including this same population of families. Our medical providers rely heavily on my knowledge-base, to support not only these families with children and youth having disabilities, but also many adult patients here at our clinic, with lifelong developmental disabilities.

As a current Parent Representative/Voting Member of The CT Family Support Council, an appointee of Senate Pro Tem, Don Williams, I take my charge to support constituent families very seriously. While he entrusts me to accurately depict and report on the realities faced by families having children with disabilities, I could not in good conscience, endorse the merging of OPA with CHRO. Any change to the function of OPA and how it does the business of advocating for the individuals it is charged to support, would be an extremely bad decision with egregious consequences.

I am grateful and consider it a privilege, to once again, be able to provide testimony related to a proposal I believe will cause irreparable damage to my family, my friends, my patients and clients, and my fellow constituents. I beseech you to challenge this proposal and thank you for this opportunity to speak against this merger.

Respectfully,

Mona Tremblay, Putnam CT  
(860)928-6514, [advocatefor2@yahoo.com](mailto:advocatefor2@yahoo.com)