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Governor

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D.
Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
TO THE
COMMERCE COMMITTEE**

H.B. No. 5105 AN ACT CONCERNING THE JOB EXPANSION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING CERTAIN SERVICES FROM THE DEPARTMENTS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

February 21, 2012

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and members of the Commerce Committee. I am Commissioner Terrence W. Macy of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for raising **H.B. No. 5105 - An Act Concerning the Job Expansion Tax Credit Program and Individuals Receiving Certain Services from the Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Developmental Services** on behalf of the Departments of Developmental Services and Mental Health and Addiction Services. I am testifying in strong support of the bill that allows employers, who hire DDS consumers receiving employment services from the department, to receive tax credits under the Job Expansion Tax Credit Program.

When the legislature enacted Public Act 11-1 (October Special Session) - An Act Promoting Economic Growth and Job Creation in the State, DDS was pleased that a tax credit for employers who hire individuals with disabilities had been included as part of the plan for state job expansion. Several DDS consumers also receive job training through the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and employers are currently eligible for the tax credit for hiring these DDS consumers. But, DDS supports many more individuals who are seeking paid employment and are receiving employment services only through DDS. While BRS provides upfront skills assessment, job training and job development supports on a short-term basis, DDS employment services provide on-going supports to help make sure individuals keep their jobs.

With this expansion of the tax credit, it opens up a new pool of workers that employers can hire from to receive the tax credit and it offers DDS consumers who are looking for paid employment the opportunity to compete for a job in the workforce. H.B. No. 5105 requires no new dollars be set aside for this tax credit but expands the existing number of employers who may be eligible to receive the tax credit for hiring persons in DDS and DMHAS employment services.

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An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

As detailed in DDS's Five Year Plan for 2012 to 2017, one key piece of the department's commitment to the individual and his or her family is developing and encouraging paid employment opportunities for all individuals who can work. The Five Year Plan states "Individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities must have opportunities to work in jobs as part of the general work force, among people who do not have disabilities. Their opportunities for earning wages and benefits should be the same as everyone else's." The department's goals for the next five years are aggressive and include (1) increasing the number of individuals who are gainfully employed, including self-employment and (2) doubling the number of people who are competitively employed. The provision in H.B. No. 5105 that opens the Job Expansion Tax Credit Program to DDS consumers in the department's employment services will go a long way towards expanding their opportunities for meaningful, paid employment. It will also help DDS to meet its employment goals so that persons with intellectual disability can not only live in the community but work there as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill. Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 if you require additional information or would like to discuss further DDS's support of H.B. No. 5105.