The Arc.
Connecticut

Testimony to the Human Services Committee
March 1, 2012
By Nora Duncan, Executive Director

Raised Senate Bill 30: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET CONCERNING HUMAN SERVICES (Opposition/Concerns)
Raised Senate Bill 230: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY CHOICES FOR LONG-TERM CARE AND DISABILITY SERVICES (Support)
Raised Senate Bill 231: AN ACT MODIFYING THE KATIE BECKETT HOME CARE WAIVER PROGRAM (Support)
Raised Senate Bill 232: AN ACT EXTENDING A MORATORIUM ON NURSING HOME BEDS (Support)

The Arc Connecticut is a 60-year old advocacy organization committed to protecting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to promoting opportunities for their full inclusion in the life of their communities.

The following are brief comments on a variety of bills before the committee.

S.B. No. 30: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET CONCERNING HUMAN SERVICES: The concerns about this bill are the same as the concerns raised on 2/17/12 in the Appropriations Committee. Two budget factors (Sections 4-6 of the bill) result in one big problem for private nonprofit providers of residential supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These two factors:

1. a $5.2 million reduction in reimbursement rates to CLA's & ICF-MR's that are experiencing mortgage pay-offs, and
2. over 5 years without a room & Board rate increase;

pair up to create a critically underfunded private system that is being strangled with increased costs while simultaneously being relied upon more and more to provide vital supports that prevent people from being forced into more restrictive and costly settings. While the $5.2 million reduction may understandably seem like "low hanging fruit", so much critical infrastructure repair and improvement has been put off for so long that this reduction simply compounds the problem.

The 1% COLA, effective 1/1/13, for private nonprofit providers that Governor Malloy has included is the first in five years and is very much needed and appreciated. However, in the face of flat funding, other cuts, extreme increases in energy and food costs, an

unprecedented slump in the economy and reduced charitable and foundation giving, it is simply not enough to bridge the gap between the cost of doing business and inadequate reimbursement rates.

The system is at its breaking point and long term solutions that include automatic rate increases that keep pace with inflation and a commitment to move toward a single private system of supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental services is needed and it can be done in a budget neutral way that serves more individuals and families in more meaningful and creative ways. The Legislative Program Review & Investigations Committee has raised a bill, #5036, that if passed could help support this commitment and be one step of a multi-step process that:

- transitions humanely from an antiquated dually operated system to a private system of care while deploying DDS employees to fill vacant positions in other much needed areas;
- codifies the reinvestment of achieved savings into the DDS system so that Connecticut shall remain budget neutral while:
    - dramatically increasing funding to the private nonprofit providers that are able to flexibly respond to the needs of individuals and families;
    - reducing enormous and inhumane waiting lists for residential supports;
    - offering better wages and benefits, in addition to incentives for professional development, to private nonprofit provider employees; and
    - creating meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through social enterprise and creative collaborations with private entities.

S.B. No. 231: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY CHOICES FOR LONG-TERM CARE AND DISABILITY SERVICES: The Arc Connecticut supports this bill and would suggest clarifying language that emphasizes input from stakeholders in the aging and disability community, including intellectual and developmental disabilities.

S.B. No. 231: AN ACT MODIFYING THE KATIE BECKETT HOME CARE WAIVER PROGRAM: The Arc Connecticut supports the effort to expand services under this waiver.

S.B. No. 232: AN ACT EXTENDING A MORATORIUM ON NURSING HOME BEDS: The Arc Connecticut supports a 4 year extension of the moratorium on nursing home beds so that efforts to expand home and community based services and decrease the reliance on institutions can continue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, for clarification or to arrange a visit with a private provider of community based services in you area. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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