

Comments regarding legislative bill 5433

Submitted by Carl Noll on March 13, 2012

Address: 890 Stratfield Road, Fairfield, CT 06825 Telephone: 203-334-5215

Good Afternoon:

My name is Carl Noll. I live in Fairfield, and have two sons who are severely challenged. Eric the elder of the two is a 45 year old autistic, who was one of the first DDS clients to be funded by the Self Determination program some 16 years ago. Self determination was established to allow the state to reduce expenses for people like Eric by having either the client or their surrogates manage the client's program. At that time it was typical for the state to expend approximately \$100,000 dollars a year to fund a 24 hour 7 day a week program for someone like Eric. For Eric, the self determination program is costing the state around \$35,000. This figure has stayed the same since the programs inception thereby keeping any staff's wages frozen. It is this stagnancy in wages that is the crux of the issue. The union, and apparently the governor claim that by exercising the particulars of this bill, the wage issue can be rectified. The union claims it can approach the legislature with proposals, and by collective bargaining can get the legislature to appropriate funds for pay increases. I doubt that that is possible since DDS funding is a budget line item which is set by the legislature every two years.

My family is extremely satisfied with the self determination program and with the support which we have received from our DDS case workers over the years. We see no reason to change this set up and believe that should this bill pass, Eric's program would be limited because union fees would come out of the line item that Eric is allocated for staff wages which is fixed. Therefore the amount of money from that line item which is available for the staff's hours would decrease and the net wages would go down.

We see no need for these self determination PCAs to be included with the consumers to whom this bill applies. Therefore, I would like to recommend that the bill be defeated, again, permanently and, failing that, I propose the following changes:

1. Add a statement in 'Section 1 (1) Consumers' stating that: "DDS consumers PCAs covered by the Self Determination initiative be exempted from union membership."
2. Change Section 2 (a) (6) relating to the makeup of the Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council to read "at least six members who shall each be a consumer or surrogate, those members to be chosen after reasonable public notice is given so that interested clients and surrogates will be considered for these roles.

This will allow consumers and surrogates to be the majority on the committee. They are the experts, NOT the politicians.