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Testimony Before the Program Review and Investigations Committee

In Opposition to HB 5036

February 22, 2012

My name is Sandra Trionfini and I am an attorney with the Waterbury office of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. Part of my practice includes the representation of individuals and families who are clients of the Department of Developmental Services.

I am here today to speak in opposition of Raised Bill No. 5036, specifically Section 1(a)(3) and (4). Families seeking residential services from DDS often find themselves in emergency situations. It is not unusual for parents to be elderly, ill or disabled themselves, seeking residential placement for their middle aged children. The waiting list for residential placement from DDS usually guarantees a long wait of many years. To enact a bill which places further restrictions on families in these dire or emergency conditions only exacerbates these difficult situations.

Sections 1(a)(3) and (4) restrict placements into state run community living arrangements (group homes). Specifically, restrictions are enacted on the placement of individuals unless "such facility is the only facility designed to serve a specific need of a client" or "pursuant to a court order." This would effectively exclude placement into state run homes, leaving private provider agency homes as the only option for residential placement for many individuals with urgent placement needs. Although the privatization of residential placements is an acceptable goal, in an emergency situation families need all available resources.

I urge you to oppose this part of Raised Bill No. 5036 as it harms the many families in Connecticut who have raised their children with intellectual disability in their homes but now find themselves in need of residential services.

