



Testimony to the Transportation Committee

March 5, 2012

**Support for Raised Senate Bill #5368: AN ACT CONCERNING THE MODERNIZATION
OF THE STATE'S TAXICAB INDUSTRY.**

By Nora Duncan, Executive Director

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

While the current taxi permitting process in Connecticut is complicated and the subject of significant debate, the need for additional accessible transportation for individuals with disabilities is overwhelming. A modernization of the application, permitting and hearing processes may help expand access to taxi service in the long term.

I was recently visiting The Arc of Meriden- Wallingford and staff told me about a disturbing situation encountered by one of the consumers of Department of Developmental Services (DDS) that the organization supports. This gentleman secured part time employment in Hartford through DDS and was forced to ultimately turn down the job as a result of unreliable and inadequate taxi service in the area. The Arc Meriden-Wallingford is able to provide a significant amount of transportation within the local area, but was unable to accommodate the regular trip to Hartford due to financial limitations and vans that were busy with other routes each day.

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities need additional transportation options in order to live independent and fully integrated lives in their communities. Self-advocates have identified transportation as one of their top areas of statewide concern and as a major barrier to employment, medical care, civic engagement and independence. Additional accessible taxis will help alleviate some of these barriers and meet the intent of ADA law. The Arc Connecticut Self Advocate Advisory Panel has met with the Department of Transportation Commissioner and Senator Maynard on their concerns and has set a joint meeting in April with them that will also include the Department of Developmental Services Commissioner. Their goal is to work on increasing transportation access and this legislation offers some opportunity, albeit limited, to work toward that goal.

Thank you for your efforts and please do not hesitate to call upon The Arc Connecticut for more information or further clarification of our position.

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