



**Testimony to the Appropriations Committee
February 15, 2013
By Leslie Simoes, Executive Director**

Testimony: H.B. No. 6350 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2015, AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO REVENUE

The Arc Connecticut is a 60-year old advocacy organization committed to protecting the basic civil basic rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to promoting opportunities for their full inclusion in the life of their communities. We have 18 chapters across Connecticut providing direct support and services. We rose from grass roots advocacy and have hundreds of families and individuals with disabilities in our Arc family.

The Governor proposed his budget on February 6th, 2012 and The Arc Connecticut is concerned about items presented specifically in the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) portion.

The Arc Connecticut supports Commissioner Macy's direction and vision for the department and commends the administration with many new family centered, person driven initiatives. The mission of DDS to partner with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their their families to create opportunities for individuals to fully participate as members of their communities is not only morally and fundamentally in alignment with national trends but a mission that can be achieved with adequate resources.

It is clear that the administration used a "scalpel not a hatchet" for implementing reductions in services and while we appreciate the time spent carefully looking at how to do less harm, the fact still remains that without the adequate resources, realizing the mission of the department and fully supporting individuals and families will not be met. The continued underfunding and slow starvation of this support system is often painful for all who rely on and who provide these services.

This budget shows hidden implementations that cannot be explained at present and we feel will do harm if the budget as written is allowed to be implemented. Families across Connecticut WILL FEEL the effects of a hatchet.

There are numerous things to consider here:

- The way Medicaid is funding supports and services is changing with less & less resources being allocated to Connecticut on a federal level.
- The DDS system of support was created on an expensive, outdated institutional model that cannot sustain itself. DDS is working diligently to improve and transform systems of support but without the resources needed this task is next to impossible.
- There is a very real crisis as children on the Autism Spectrum age out of school at an alarming rate. You must have an IQ of 69 or lower to be eligible for DDS services but many of these children will be entering an adult service system with no support.
- No new money has been added in the DDS budget for families on the combined DDS residential waiting and planning list since June 2009. There are many families on these combined lists now who have been a Priority 1 or higher for 8 plus years and there is no sign of assistance on the way. While the numbers DDS uses in their M.I.R. reports say approximately 346 families are on the waiting list, DDS is not tracking numbers of the Planning lists. The Planning Lists have families that will need a residential support within the next 5-10 years. This number increases monthly.
- DDS is asking families and siblings to do more with less while cutting the very in home supports they rely on such as Family Support Grants, & Respite Services.

The DDS yearly budget is a little over 1 billion dollars and supports approximately 20,000 people. DDS spends close to \$380,000 per year per resident for approximately 370 people living at Southbury Training School, over \$400,000 per person per year for 200 individuals living at the Regional Centers and \$0.00 for families on the DDS Residential Waiting and Planning Lists.

DDS has resources. Together families, individuals with disabilities and DDS need to look at how we spend money and how we can reallocate existing resources in ways that can not only fully support the individuals we serve, the providers that support them but serve the families on the waiting list.

You will hear today testimony from many Arc agencies and non-Arc agencies about the specific details of Medicaid reimbursement rates, underfunding, unfunded mandates and the ability for providers in the state to maintain small businesses in the state of Connecticut.

Every legislator has a DDS funded agency in their district. Every legislator has families' either receiving DDS services, waiting for DDS services or both. This is statewide systemic issue that crosses all socioeconomic, gender, race and geographic boundaries. We all need to be involved if we are going to make this system work for EVERYONE. The costs are too high, needs are being ignored.

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

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