



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
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**Testimony submitted in support of the Centers for Independent Living funding in the  
Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS)**

Submitted by:  
James D. McGaughey

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Walker:

This is to urge support for continued funding for Connecticut's five Centers for Independent Living in the budget for the Department of Rehabilitative Services.

Each year, our Office receives hundreds of inquiries from people with disabilities who are struggling to find or keep their place in the world. Whether their needs involve budgeting assistance, locating accessible housing or transportation, arranging or managing their own personal care, transitioning from long term care facilities or family homes, or joining with others to raise issues of concern to local officials, we often refer those individuals to a Center for Independent Living (CIL). CILs promote self-reliance and personal empowerment amongst people with all types of disabilities, and serve as a single point of entry for (and guidance about) the various programs and support services that individuals with disabilities must often weave together in order to have a place they can call home and a sense of control over their own lives. And, because they are operated and administered by people with disabilities, their operations model the type of self-reliance that they teach and we all support.

There are five CILs in Connecticut, each covering a specific geographic area. Historically, they have survived financially on a combination of federal and state funds. This year's budget proposal envisions eliminating the state funding for these programs, a total of approximately \$528,680. Such a cut would translate into significantly fewer staff positions, which, in programs that are already too small to satisfy the demand for their services, would seriously compromise the effectiveness of these centers. Although I recognize that our State is experiencing extraordinarily difficult times, I urge you to ensure that funds for CILs are not eliminated from the budget you enact for the upcoming biennium.

If I can provide any other information or if there are questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

c. Appropriations Committee  
Daria Smith, Exec. Dir., CSIL