
From: Tom Wade <Wade.thomas@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 9:36 AM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Cc: Melissa Marshall - CTBLN; daria.ctsilc@gmail.com; lisa stefanko; deborah sampson
Subject: do not eliminate funding for centers for independent living

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To Whom It May Concern,

February 8, 2013

I am writing in regard to the Governor's current budget proposal which would eliminate Department of Rehabilitation Services funds to the Centers for Independent Living. They provide, and have provided an extremely valuable resource for persons with all types of disabilities. I am able to speak from a personal perspective, and I hope this funding will not be eliminated.

After graduating from college in 1986, I was in search of gainful employment. I am paralyzed from the shoulders down and therefore realized my job opportunities needed to meet both my goals as a person, but also be something I was physically capable of doing. After a number of job interviews, I was hired by the Center for Independent Living in Stratford. My two years with the Center for Independent Living helped me learn what I needed to do to accommodate my physical limitations and still complete my job duties. The education I received about myself was much more valuable than any paycheck rendered.

After two years of successful employment with the Center of independent living, I applied, interviewed and was hired to work as a counselor with the State of Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. Using the skills I had learned working with the people at the Center for Independent Living, who took a substantial amount of time with me both during and after work to help me adjust to a working environment, I became very competent as a rehabilitation counselor. As a rehabilitation counselor I continually depended upon the Center for Independent Living to assist me with advocating, transitioning, and counseling clients we had in common. Their input was invaluable, and resulted in a number of clients obtaining medical equipment, leaving skilled nursing facilities to live independently, and pursuing degrees in higher education.

With the confidence I had gained through working for the Center for Independent Living, I went on to Graduate school and became certified in secondary education. I have since been teaching in a public high school for over 20 years. However, this is not about what I have accomplished, it is about how I accomplished it. And, I can say without a doubt, the confidence and training I received with the Center for Independent Living were extremely important for me, as well as so many others I have seen work with different Centers for Independent Living across the State. Their advocacy, mentoring,

information and referral are unique and necessary components for any person with a disability in the State of Connecticut.

I urge you to not allow the money for the Centers for Independent Living in the State of Connecticut to be taken away from our State budget.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Wade