

Testimony of Carolyn A. Barbaresi

Appropriations Sub-Committee Public Hearing February 22, 2013

Restore Funding to CT's Independent Living Centers.

My name is Carolyn Barbaresi and I have been employed at Independence NW in Naugatuck for almost 8 years. We are an independent living center; which means we provide services for people with all different kinds of disabilities. 51% of our staff and Board of Directors are people with disabilities.

Currently, I run the HOPWA program: a rental assistance program for people with HIV/AIDS. This program has prevented families from becoming homeless, ensured proper medical care/prevention and allowed a consumer (with 6 months to live) to die with dignity.

I also supervise our deaf services program, which is the only one like it in the NW part of CT. We have a deaf person on staff to work with the consumers and since I am hearing and am fluent in ASL, I provide interpreting services.

Without the state funding, we would lose our infrastructure that subsidizes the following programs: Money Follows the Person, Aging & Disability Resource Centers, Ticket to Work as well as the 2 programs mentioned above.

Our main goal is: **independent living.** This means assisting consumers with disabilities to return to school and work. It means taking people out of nursing homes and transitioning them back into the community. It means, empowering people with disabilities to be productive members of society.

Living independently = saving money.

Why eliminate state funding to an agency who actually saves the state money?

Submitted by:

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