



March 11, 2013

To: **COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS**

From: Kirk A. Springsted, Vice President, Administration,

Re: ***“AN ACT MAKING THE JANITORIAL WORK PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY OR A DISADVANTAGE PERMANENT”***

My name is Kirk Springsted. I am the Vice President of Administration for the Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA). CCPA represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities. I am here to speak in favor of Senate Bill 761.

This is a measure which we view first and foremost as providing opportunities for people with disabilities to gain employment and to work towards self sufficiency.,

In Connecticut in 2011, the rate of employment for people with disabilities people was 38%.<sup>i</sup> Historically, the rate of employment for people with severe disabilities is even lower. No other segment of society eligible to be part of the work force has such poor employment statistics. A by-product of a low rate of employment rate for people with disabilities is that their economic well being is substantially worse than for those without disabilities.

In 1977, the Connecticut Legislature created a preferred purchasing program (PA 77-405; CGS 17b-656) to address low employment rates for people with disabilities. The statute promotes employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities through government contracting. Since the original legislation, and through the program, community providers supply state agencies with needed products and services rendered by people with disabilities. The program has produced employment, employment training, work hours and wages for people with disabilities in a variety of work settings, including janitorial services, dry cleaning, temporary services, commercial laundry, landscaping, and manufacturing.

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**CCPA**

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**The Preferred Purchasing Program highlights for last year include:**

- \$2.74 million in wages (bringing the total over the last ten years to \$24 million for workers with severe disabilities)
- 691 employment opportunities for people with disabilities

A 2013 national economic benefit study of similar programs shows that Connecticut saves over \$2,000 per worker employed through the program as the result of reductions in entitlement programs and increased tax payments. By putting people to work through this program Connecticut saves \$800,000 per year.

In 2006, the Connecticut Legislature expanded this program by creating the Qualified Partnership Pilot Program (PA 06-129 CGS 4a-82). The bill established a pilot program that promoted employment for people with disabilities and economic disadvantages with commercial sector janitorial contractors, an employment model that follows the priorities of the Departments of Developmental Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Rehabilitation Services. That bill was the result of cooperative work of the Department of Administrative Services, 32SBJ, and CCPA and its providers with the objective of creating standard wage opportunities for people with disabilities and economic disadvantages.

**The Pilot Program highlights include:**

- Eleven Partnerships formed between Commercial Sector Janitorial companies and Community Providers
- DAS Awarded Six Pilot Contracts
- The Pilot created employment for people with disabilities and economic disadvantages in commercial work settings

S.B. 761 makes the program permanent and offers the opportunity to expand it.

We urge you to support this vital legislation and help protect employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Disabilitystatistics.org – American Community Survey