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House Bill 6001
Public Health Committee
Public Hearing: 2/27/13

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivansan and members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing to request your support for **House Bill 6001- An Act Concerning Residential Communities for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities.**

I am extremely grateful to State Rep. Terrie Wood for sponsoring HB6001 and to the Public Health Committee members for pursuing this legislation that will help to lay the groundwork for Green Hills Farm & Community (GHF&C) an innovation, self-sustaining community for adults with developmental disabilities.

I am the father (and previous resident of CT for over 45 years until moving to Florida recently) to Nicole, a beautiful 21 year old developmentally delayed young lady who lives in Norwalk CT with her mother. For the past 6 years Nicole's mother and I have been researching various adult programs in state, out of state and in foreign countries so we were knowledgeable about the options available to children like Nicole when they transition out of the educational system. What we found was not encouraging and it became quite apparent that current service providers in CT are struggling to keep up with the increasing demand for residential and vocational adult services. In addition the model that we feel will best suit Nicole while it exists in other countries and states it does not exist in CT. So, my ex-wife and other parents, business people and volunteers set out to fill a demand and are created the concept for Green Hills Farm & Community, a farming community where people like Nicole will be able to thrive and live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

My daughter loves the outdoors, an avid animal lover, extremely engaging, likes helping in the kitchen and being with people. She started riding horses in CT at the age of 7 and now rides independently 4 times a week. The therapeutic benefits of her horse riding and caring for the horses have helped her tremendously. The same is true for dogs and other animals; she has a nurturing and caring manner, which animals can sense. She is also extremely verbal and socially engaging people whenever and wherever she can. She loves to entertain and be a "good helper" as she calls herself. Nicole needs to live in open spaces where she can work with animals, be part of a community, have friends, do meaningful work to fill her days and live in a safe and nurturing environment. Green Hills Farm & Community (GHF&C) will provide the important ingredients to ensure Nicole and others like her live rewarding lives.

I am aging and quite sick now with only months left and want nothing more than to know that my daughter will be able to spend the rest of her life at Green Hills Farm & Community, a safe and nurturing environment being created by a strong team of parents, educational professionals and business people.

The purpose of **HB6001** is to encourage the State of Connecticut to be a partner and cheerleader for this pilot project. Please join the other supporters of GHF&C.

Thank you very much for your support of **House Bill 6001.**