

Testimony of Walter Glomb to the Appropriations Committee on February 18, 2014

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Walter Glomb. I am a resident of Rockville. I have three sons. My youngest, Nick, who is now 25 years old, lives with Down Syndrome. Nick receives Individual Supported Employment services from the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services under a Medicaid waiver. He is able to live and earn a competitive wage without full-time assistance however he does need some help with some vital activities.

As a parent of a child who lives with an intellectual disability, I have been active in a number of advocacy organizations. I served on the board of directors of the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress where I was the president for four years. I am presently a leader of the Family Empowerment Task Force, a statewide organization of parents. I have also served on committees and advisory councils for the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Education. Through these activities I have direct personal experience with hundreds of families of individuals who live with intellectual disabilities - and insight to our state services.

Currently, my son Nick lives with me and we have just begun to explore ways to have Nick live in his own apartment with appropriate supports. He certainly does not require the full-time, custodial care of a group home. He just needs some help managing his affairs. For the past year I have been meeting with groups of parents who are creating new sustainable housing solutions for their adult children with intellectual disabilities. At meetings in Groton, Meriden, Norwalk, Danbury, Bristol, Willimantic and Hartford more than a hundred parents have contributed their ideas, their concerns and their inspirational housing solutions. Through this process, a picture is beginning to emerge. It is a varied landscape of highly individualized solutions.

It is clear that we have come a very long way from the one-size-fits-all institutional solutions of the past. Generally, people are living in their own homes. These homes may be private residences or rented apartments. Some with live with 24-7 care - others with occasional supports. Where more than one individual shares the residence, there are generally less than five individuals in the home. Some use staff that are managed by an agency and many hire their own staff. We do not have the time today for me to describe all the details of these non-institutional solutions. I would be pleased to share more with you and your staff at a later time.

While the costs of these solutions are generally less than the costs of a group home, most of us still do not have the personal resources to cover all the expenses - so these solutions are financed by a combination of sources that include the DDS Continuous Residential Support and Individual Housing Support Waivers, DDS rent subsidies, personal Special Needs Trusts, and federal, state and local housing programs.

These are the public programs that need your support. These non-institutional, community-based DDS residential programs have been chronically underfunded. There are currently at least 3,500 families in need of residential assistance and waiting for funding to become available – yet last year the Governor and the legislature rescinded nearly \$20 million from these programs. Now the state enjoys a substantial surplus while these families continue to struggle.

Thank you for your attention.