

Testimony to be given on March 19, 2014 to the Public Health Committee.

My name is Carl Noll, I am the father of two sons who are served by DDS.

Eric, is a 47 year old autistic man who lives at home with my wife and me. Robert, vision impaired and hydrocephalic, 44 has been a client of the Connecticut Institute for the Blind (Oak Hill) since he was 5. He has lived at Oak Hill since that time.

I come today to speak in favor of Raised Bill 5534. We are retirees who wonder about what will happen to Eric when we can no longer care for him. An apartment with a roommate, or a group home, would be a viable option. As we began to investigate possibilities for him, changes in DDS policies and major funding cuts have virtually eliminated new group homes, and provide for residential placements only for dire emergency situations. As we get closer to the point when Eric would need a residential placement, none may be available. We see the happy life that Eric has lived until now as ending when Noreen and I can no longer provide for him. We have concerns regarding Robert as well since funding cuts have impacted Oak Hill more and more each year. When I read Raised Bill 5534, the words literally leapt off the page. Here is a bill that would answer our prayers, and those of all others in similar situations provided it is executed to the letter and totally funded..

This bill, if executed to the letter would resolve our major issue, and possibly provide a the opportunity for Eric to pursue the happiness that is provided to him, and everyone by the Declaration of Independence.

I know the raising of this bill only scratches the surface. I know that the bill might not pass, or if passed, might be watered down, or if and when it goes before the Appropriations Committee, that adequate funding might not be available, but as of now, Bill 5534 is our best, latest and possibly last hope.

I urge the legislature to pass this bill and provide within a reasonable period of time, enough funding to provide whatever is required in order to allow people with learning disabilities to live their lives to the fullest potential in a safe nurturing environment.

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