

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jean Scott Brookman  
34 Averill Place  
Branford, CT 06405  
jeanscott.art@gmail.com  
203 500 6756

Dear Connecticut State Senators and Representatives:

I most strongly urge and beseech you to vote in favor of HB 5534, an Act Concerning the Provision of Services to Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities. **Please consider my son's experience:**

DDS funding has allowed my 23 year old son Evan to join Vista Vocational & Life Skills Outreach Program in Westbrook and live with friends semi-independently with help from life skills instructors and other Vista staff. He participates in Vista's day program and has access to clubs, classes and group activities. He goes shopping, banking, rides the bus and participates in community life, doing things for himself proudly and successfully. He has a life rather than a long string of days spent alone in his room, and he continues learning skills toward greater self-sufficiency and gainful employment. Most important, the home he is creating now will sustain him after his father and I are dead. Evan is one of the lucky ones, who received funding before the budget for DDS was slashed.

**Please also consider the ripple effects DDS funding creates:**

Because Evan no longer requires constant care, teaching and supervision at home, I have been able to rejoin the work force full-time after a 20-year absence. While I will never achieve the career goals I once had, I am earning income, paying taxes, contributing to Evan's financial support and helping pay for college for our younger son. In addition, my job helps support my husband Michael's second job as the inventor and developer of the BRASH (Binary Recovery Air Steam Hybrid) engine. This is new, green technology Mike has patented for automotive and residential heat and power applications. So far, BRASH has partnered with students at UConn, U of Hartford and UNH, has offered employment to a few, and is on track to bring many more jobs to our state while significantly reducing energy costs throughout Connecticut and beyond.

It's not too much of a stretch to say that BRASH would be hampered in its development if not for the benefit of DDS funding at a crucial moment in our lives. But ripple effects work the other way, too. Families who don't receive adequate (or any) DDS funding face a stunted present and a stillborn future, stretching their resources to the limit until the day both parents are dead and the person with disabilities becomes a DDS emergency - at great financial and emotional cost.

It doesn't have to be this way. Right now, families across Connecticut are working hard on new ways to share resources, including using social media platforms to communicate with each other, developing a roommate-resource matching database, proposing innovative financial tools to save and invest in permanent housing, partnering with providers and community groups, and more. Dependable financial support would mean we could create safe, secure futures not only for our children but for variously abled people from all families - including yours.

Passing HB 5534 is the first step toward offering ALL families in Connecticut the opportunities all families deserve: the chance to meet their children's basic needs, to plan for a hopeful future and to fully participate in the world at large.

**Please vote "Yes" on HB 5534.**

Thank you.