

Testimony of Kathleen Peters on Raised H.B. No. 5534 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. I am the Reverend Kathleen Peters and I live in Killingworth (65 Parker Hill Rd 860-663-1448 revkathyp@comcast.net) with my husband and our 30 year old intellectually disabled daughter Sarah.

I am here today for my daughter and for all others who live with intellectual disabilities and their families to speak on behalf of Raised H.B. No. 5534 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

We are blessed that our daughter receives supported employment funds from the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services and we have lived with the assurance that when she was ready, the department would work with us to fund a supported living arrangement for her. Now that we and she are ready, we are being told that there are no funds and we will need to wait until we are both dead and buried or worse ...and can I even bare to say this...if we do something to endanger the health and safety of our child before we can maybe get funding. This is an intolerable situation. Our families can't wait, we need funding now so that our most vulnerable citizens get the comprehensive services that they need. And while my husband and I have looked into funding a staffed living situation for Sarah on our own, it is beyond our middle class means to sustain for more than 2-3 years before we go through all of our retirement savings. We love our daughter very much but we cannot do this alone.

This bill is not perfect and there are many questions to be answered about eligibility and how all this will be funded. There are also a myriad of issues around how the DDS systems are currently not working. System change is needed and the legislature needs to facilitate a plan to make those changes as well as creating a mechanism that would allow the savings the department is working so hard to make to stay within the DDS system so that more can be served. I am well aware that changes will not happen overnight.

However ladies and gentlemen we must begin now and this bill is essential. You, other legislators and essential stakeholders can work together to make this provision of services a reality.

Our daughter works, rides a horse, sings in the church choir, is the #1 UCONN Women's fan and is a registered voter. She is one of your constituents! But she cannot do more than add one plus one, or know what to do in an emergency or drive or schedule doctors' appointment. She will need support and supervision all of her life.

My husband and I are proud members of the silver tsunami and we need to have the security of supports in place for our daughter now...not when we are dead.

Do you ladies and gentlemen want to be a part of a society that says no we cannot... we will not... care for our sons and daughters, who cannot care for themselves? I know I do not.

Please support this bill and more funding....we just can't wait.

Thank you!