

March 19, 2014

To the Members of the Public Health Committee,

I came to the LOB today to ask for support of a bill currently before the Public Health Committee – An Act Concerning Funding for Residential Placement for Persons with Developmental Disabilities.

I have worked for DDS for 33 years, the last 18 in the Family Support Division with individuals who live at home with their family. While some are happy and content in their living situation there are others that are in need of residential funding to enable them to live with others or on their own. Currently parents are being told there is no funding for residential support unless it is an emergency situation – which in short means they don't have a place to live, or they are in a situation that is unsafe. Families are now being expected to plan for their loved one's life care, but that doesn't work for every family, nor should it be expected.

I am blessed to have healthy children without mental retardation or other developmental disability. I don't know of anyone who hopes to have a child with a disability. But for those who have a special needs child, we as a society need to provide support and care for those who cannot care for themselves. That is what I feel our tax dollars should be used for....to help those who are unable to take care of themselves. We raise our children and send them off to work or college to enable them to care for themselves....folks with developmental disabilities usually don't have that option due to their limited cognitive ability. Parents should not have to provide care for their 35, 40, 50 year old child on a daily basis. Families need help.....and funding this bill will enable them to plan and obtain supports needed.

I have a woman on my caseload who has been on the waiting list for the past 8 years as a Priority 1...her single Mom is 65, has health issues, no other family support, and cannot leave her daughter alone for more than a few minutes due to behavioral and safety issues. She feels like a hostage and wants help. She found a home with another individual for her daughter to live with but we (DDS) have no funding to support this. Projected cost - \$67,000. Per year to cover staffing 24 hours a day based on 3 person occupancy.

I have a 40 year old young man who lives at home with his 70+ year old parents. He has CP, is wheelchair bound, and total care. They have asked for in home support to keep him home and help them provide for his care, as the home health aides only cover 2 hours in the morning, and they have no coverage on the weekends. Again they are held hostage and can't go away to see their grandchildren or travel to the places they hoped to see in their retirement. They love their son and want to keep him home as long as possible but they need regular help!

These are just 2 of many examples I have to share. So please support funding for residential funding for folks with developmental disabilities. If you have any questions I would be happy to try to answer them!

Sincerely,

Patty Crean Daniels
78 Northwood Dr.
Waterbury, CT 06708
203-233-4779