STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Public Hearing
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
Governor's Proposed Budget
Department of Rehabilitation Services
February 27, 2015

Testifying against the elimination of the State Independent Living Centers

My name is Molly Cole and I am the Executive Director of the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. I am testifying today in opposition to the elimination of funding for the Centers for Independent Living from the budget of the Department of Rehabilitation Services. The Council is a Governor-appointed Council which includes people with developmental disabilities, family members and professionals working toward full inclusion of children and adults with all disabilities in the community. We are totally federally funded under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities has called on the Governor and the State Legislature to close all state institutions that house individuals with intellectual disabilities by 2020 and to transition all residents to appropriate homes in integrated settings in the community. The Independent Living Centers support that effort.

The staff of these centers does a remarkable job in supporting people with disabilities in their communities at a time when many other supports have already been eliminated. They offer these supports in with a small but very dedicated professional staff who are knowledgeable about their communities and the needs of people with disabilities. Elimination of the Centers for Independent Living will have a direct impact on the ability of our communities to provide services to people with disabilities where

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they live, work and play and on the ability of our state to move people from costly institutional settings to appropriate and less costly community settings.

The CILs are an integral component of Money Follows the Person (MFP). In 2014 CILs transitioned 111 people with disabilities from nursing facilities to community living, saving the state a minimum of $4,914,081 - almost 10 times the annual state funding for the Independent Living Centers. In addition, CILs prevented people with disabilities from entering nursing facilities saving a minimum of $540,015.

If funding for Independent Living Centers is eliminated vital Independent Living services for people with disabilities will be reduced, including a loss of jobs for people with disabilities who are employed at these centers at a time when approximately 80 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed.

The Council urges the Appropriations Committee to retain funding for the Independent Living Centers as a vital and essential element of support services to people with disabilities in their communities.

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