

My name is Linda DeVecchio of 83 Wooster Street, Milford, CT 06461

I am protesting the Governor's proposed budget cuts to DDS.

I have a wonderful friend, Deborah Wissner, who was unfortunate enough to have twins, a boy and a girl, who were diagnosed with Severe Autism when they were three years of age, shortly before her husband passed away. She was unable to continue her job at Milford Police Department, and left the job to take full time care of her two children on her husband's pension. For 13 years she has taken care of those children by herself, fighting for every benefit they were entitled to, researching things for her own knowledge of how best to help her children at home, and trying to be sure that they were being educated to the best of their abilities. Both children are severely autistic, but she has always let them know how very much she loves them, no matter how they act or act up. Her son Frank is non-verbal, unable to be toilet trained, and unable to take care of himself in any way. He was taken from the CCCD school he was in, and it took 4-6 staff members to control him. He had become increasingly aggressive and destructive, injuring himself and anyone else in the vicinity when he was admitted on June 6, 2014 to the Psychiatric Hospital at Yale New Haven. He has now been in the hospital for 8 months, he has been cleared by the doctors to be placed into a facility where they could care for him, but for the past several months, she has had absolutely no luck in having him placed because the concerned agencies cannot decide who needs to pay the bills for him. When did it become more important to save money than to save a child? I have never heard Deb ask "why me?" or complain about the work to care for them 24 hours a day. She is almost always smiling, and making light of the events and destruction and injuries she has sustained from the two children. I have no idea what the options will be for Frank if these cuts are voted through; but they will be catastrophic for Deborah, who has another 16 year old autistic daughter, who will soon need residential care also.

I am requesting that the Appropriations committee stop the cuts to DDS, restore full funding to DDS and that the DDS waiting list also be funded. These are children and mentally needy adults we are dealing with, not just one less garbage pick up per month. Put these children and families needs before the need to raise salaries next contract!