

We are the parents of a 37 year old son with Down Syndrome. We were very fortunate to have Jon receive funding for residential services and for that we are extremely grateful. But now we and so many other families face another problem, the Governor's massive, draconian cuts to the DDS budget. Our most vulnerable citizens are being placed more at risk. The State of Connecticut takes better care of the incarcerated than it does of our children who are disabled, some times so disabled they require care 24/7 and their parents are prisoners in their own homes because they are the only caregivers.

We strongly urge you to stand up for the rights of our children. DO NOT approve the massive cuts to the DDS budget that have been proposed. Restore and add funding to an appropriate level to help all our families. OUR FAMILIES CAN'T WAIT.

We are both retired and over the age of 70. Jonathan is competitively employed in our community. He has worked at Stop and Shop for 15 plus years and he currently lives independently. Up to two years ago it didn't look like that was going to happen although he has been a priority one on the DDS List for as long as we can remember. Based on everything we heard, if Jon was to live independently we were going to have to make it happen. If an emergency situation occurred because something happened to us, we didn't want him pulled out of the community he knows, loose his job, friends and church.

Well we did it. There would be no help from the state in finding a place or anything else. His living independently was not due to the efforts of the state but due to our hard work in finding a place for him, purchasing the property, and spending a great deal of time and retirement money remodeling to make the place livable for him. However, many families are not in the position to do what we were able to do.

We now had a place but our biggest concern was support services, someone to take Jon shopping, work with him on cooking simple meals, see that he was doing his wash and keeping his home clean. We didn't want to move Jon in without something in place should something happen to us. About six months ago, Jon's case worker told us Jon qualified for some of the \$4 million the legislature put aside for individuals with developmental disabilities. We were lucky but there are countless others who have not been so fortunate. They need your help now! Thank you for your time and consideration.

James and Margaret Ciaglo