

March 5, 2015

To the Hearing Committee on the DDS Budget Cuts,

I am writing to testify against the Governor's proposed budget cuts to DDS. I have a 27 year old daughter who is served by DDS. She has been involved with DDS since she was born. I was one of the parents who testified to make Birth- 3 DDS state funded service. For my daughter and many, many other children in CT, thank goodness we did. However, Birth – 3 is no longer completely state funded. If my daughter were born today I doubt I would be able to afford Birth – 3. We are going backwards in this state.

My daughter's needs are great. She was one of the first children in your area to receive the DDS Community Home Based Waiver. That God that she did. It saved us from an emergency placement at age 8 for her. Keep her out of crisis and stabilized our family. At age 19 not because we wanted, but because we could not keep her safe and healthy in our home any more, Iris (our daughter) received a placement in a DDS facility over an hour away from us. Four years ago we were very fortunate to be able to move her to a private provider home close to us and at least two thirds less than the cost of the state facility.

Let me say up front, I consider my family to be very lucky. However I am very much afraid. I have been watching a trend in the state. The state is slowly withdrawing support from families and their children with ID. The Governor's proposed cuts will continue this trend and leave many families in very serious and dangerous situations.

As I have seen over the past 10 years the state is slowly reducing their supports to families and individuals with ID. Many of the services that were available and saved my entire family from going in to a crisis situation, which always cost the state a lot more to resolve, are no longer available to families. A lot of state services are now provided by a private provider. I have nothing against the state privatizing services. We have met and used many wonderful private providers. Yet over the past few years I have watched as their services to my daughter and other individuals are being cut and the standard of the services is sinking to substandard. All in an effort by the providers to sustain themselves.

What does this all mean for families and individuals like my daughter? Trouble. Without the funding for the vital programs that my daughter received and still receives including; Birth- 3, VSP program, Respite, Recreation, Family Grants, Grad funding and residential supports, children will not be come as independent as they could and will not maintain that level. The more dependent a person is the more it costs the state. Families and individuals will require more crisis intervention which can include, physical injury, medical intervention, hospitalization, out of district, out of state placements and emergency placements.

Simply put:

- In CT & America we believe in supporting those who cannot support themselves
- The state has made a commitment to the people in this state who have a disability.
- The governor's proposed cuts will undermine the care of people with ID in the state of CT. This will have a serious negative effect on all the citizen of CT. It will end up costing the state much more money in the years to come.
- The governor made the campaign promise not to weaken the safety net for our people with ID. These cuts do just that. They weaken the safety net to a dangerous level. If these cuts pass, we will not have a safety net at all. There will be nothing safe left for people ID and their families.

I am asking you to: **Please stop the cuts to DDS, restore full funding to DDS and fund the DDS waiting list.**

Respectfully submitted,

April Dipollina

Waterford, CT 06385

