

My name is Denise King and I live in Lebanon, Ct. My husband and I are the grandparents of a 24 year-old young man with intellectual disabilities. We have had custody of him and his 2 siblings since the ages of 9, 8 and 3. Matthew was put on the "Wait List" for residential placement at least 10 years ago by his case worker who assured us that when the time came, he would transition and be placed in a setting with peers so he could interact and live within the community as any young adult would. This has not happened. My husband will be 70 this year, and I will soon follow.

My husband and I have, essentially, brought up 2 families to the best of our ability. We have put 2 of our own children through college and 1 granddaughter through college as well. Our resources are now limited, as we are retired. Our grandson is important to us and we want what is best for him. We know that even though he does not understand the concept of living with his peers in a residential setting with the supervision he needs, he would thrive given the chance.

What is going on now in this state is immoral. We need the cuts to DDS stopped and all funding restored for the Residential Wait List. Our loved ones with intellectual disabilities are being asked to bear the burden of miss-management and poor choices by the very ones entrusted to care for the weakest in our state. They are being segregated in their own homes and their civil rights violated by a state government that has walked away from their responsibilities to a population that has little control over their lives and has no voice. We need you, our, legislators, to continue to step up to the plate and make this the priority it needs to be. We need you to walk a day in our shoes. Only then will you understand that hedge-funds, busways, sports complexes, high-speed rail systems, and other pet projects and ideas should not be tolerated at the expense of human beings. We are coming together for the intellectually disabled community to ask you to not let this happen. Not again. Not anymore.

We are part of a growing advocacy group who are looking to the Governor and our legislators for answers. We, as a group, can no longer tolerate the lack of movement and steps backwards this state is taking. It seems that every time a little funding is added for the DDS budget, the next year more is taken out. We are ready, willing, and able to partner with you to find funding for our loved ones with ID. This must be done.

We so much appreciate that you have given our loved ones with ID a voice. Please understand when we say, "your voice needs to be louder."

Horace Mann said, "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humankind."

Frank & Denise King, Lebanon, Ct.