

I would like to thank you Senator Bye and Rep. Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to speak to you tonight. My name is Ronald Langner and I live in Tolland with my wife Collette, and our 28-year old son, Scott., who is a DDS Client. I want to speak in opposition to the cuts/rescissions and omissions that Governor Malloy has made in the proposed DDS budget.

Approximately 2000 families have been identified as waiting for residential placements for their mentally disabled family member. (ie The Waiting List) Last year 4 million dollars was made available for individuals in households where a caregiver was aged 70 or over, for which I was qualified. This resulted in approximately 100 families becoming eligible for residential placement of their loved ones. This is an ongoing process which could require a couple of years to identify the proper setting for each individual. In our case a major impediment is that Scott needs a compatible roommate to share expenses. Since so few DDS clients have funding finding a roommate is a major problem. This is only compounded by the omission of any funds in the proposed budget to address the Waiting List. Under the proposed budget the waiting list will continue to grow as well as the greatest fear of parents: (i.e. what will happen to my child when I can no longer take care of them).

In addition to no monies for the waiting list, the proposed budget cuts \$44,654,283 the 2016 budget and \$55,140,741 from the 2017 budget. These cuts come at the expense of highly successful and economical programs within DDS. The cuts have targeted The Voluntary Services Program. This is a program where families in desperate need of assistance, have partnered with DDS to provide the supports needed to keep their children in their own homes.

The proposed cuts would also result in significant delays in providing Employment Program support to 21 year old DDS clients who are leaving the Federally mandated programs within school systems which had provided much needed supports. These delays which could be months or years would have serious consequences on families. The Employment Support program provides the needed support so that the client can work in a setting tailored to their needs. Without this support the client is left with nothing to do and the family is faced with the necessity of providing needed supports. This could easily result in need for one family member to stay home full time and quit whatever employment they may have.

These proposed cuts are particularly appalling when put in the context that no significant cuts were made in the budget of Southbury Training School (STS) which annually spends more than \$400,000 per individual to support 335

residents. This is 3 to 4 times more that what it costs to provide the same services by a private agency. DDS has acknowledged by virtue of closing admissions to STS that it will close STS since it is an archaic and prohibitively expense way to provide residential support. However, they have proposed no definitive plan to close STS, which means the actual closing could take years. This would result in the continued funding of this expensive program at the expense of better more efficient programs. This is ludicrous, and brings to mind the folly of throwing good money after bad.

I hope that the Appropriations Committee can carefully evaluate the proposed budget and either find funds to add to the budget or have the courage to move funds within the budget to better serve the needs of the DDS Clients