

Testimony to be given on March 6, 2015 at the Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the 2015-2016 Connecticut State Budget

My name is Carl Noll, I am from Fairfield, I am an alumnus of the University of Connecticut, and have two sons with severe mental challenges, one autistic, one hydrocephalic/vision impaired, who are served by the Department of Developmental Services. I am also an advocate for all like-challenged people.

When I first found the facts about the the proposed state budget proposed for 2015-2016, especially concerning the Department of Developmental Services line items I couldn't believe it. For the second budget in succession, the Governor has proposed a budget which if enacted would make the rescissions he proposed in November of 2014 permanent. I am in favor of restoring those rescissions and increasing, not decreasing the related line items in the DDS Budget. For several years the funding provided to DDS has not come close to keeping up with inflation. The Personal Care Assistants that work privately for the self-directed clients which DDS supports only recently in the past year have received wage increases which still leaves them well behind the inflationary spiral.

After cutting around 25 million dollars from the then existing 2011-2012 DDS budget in January of 2012, the governor, in his infinite wisdom, chose to cut an additional 4.3% from the 2013-2014 DDS budget. The amount was in the area of \$20 million. And now, the rescissions will add another 14 million dollars to the cutbacks for DDS, bringing the total decrease over 3 years to almost 65 million dollars eliminating significant support for citizens of this state who have no capability to provide for themselves. No other agency has had to accept cutbacks like this. And I'm constantly reminded that we here in Connecticut live in one of the most affluent states in the Union. What I am suggesting to the Appropriations Committee and the Legislature of our State is to find a way to restore the funding that DDS requires to eliminate any and all waiting lists. Even using modern mathematics, waiting lists for challenged people don't disappear by lowering budgets.

That, ladies and gentlemen is the absolute joke!! The budget insults these people and their advocates in this way. There is something wrong with this picture!! It is an insult to these people and all of those of us who support them!! It's time now for the legislature to realize this, and restore the cuts to the DDS budget, and consider future increases'

You the newly elected legislators have a golden opportunity right now, to take a large step in the right direction, by restoring and increasing a budget that is woefully inadequate to support DDS's clients.

We, the advocates of these people are always encouraged, and encourage others, to seek out our state legislators, both senators and representatives, and inform them of our challenges. We do this, we are always told that they feel for us, and are on our side, and then when it becomes crunch time, that is, when the budget is presented for review and passage you vote to eliminate more DDS funds. It's time to forget about your party stance and treat this strictly as a human issue.

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