

Hello,

My name is Laura Riley and I have a 21 year old son with autism. He received great schooling through the Simsbury Public School system and the Farmington Valley Transitional Academy until his 21st year. He received valuable job coaching, job/volunteer experiences and learning experiences. However, given his disability, it was still not enough to enable him to confidently go out and interview and secure a job in the job market. Once he "graduated" from the Simsbury public school system and the Farmington Valley academy, he basically "fell off a cliff". The daily support and structure of the school environment ended abruptly, with no follow up, no extra time or care given to aid him in seeking employment out in the real world.

I know many others in this same situation. There is a large crew of young men and women who are physically and mentally capable of work and being productive members of society, but still need more tools to do so. Unless families can afford private mentoring on the job, which can run from \$35-\$50 per hour, there are no options for these adults. They are left to sit at home on the couch watching TV, rather than being productive members of our society.

I am AGAINST the Government proposal of budget cuts to DDS. The cuts need to be STOPPED, and full-funding must be restored to DDS programs that help adults with autism and other related disabilities find employment. These cuts will not help our states economy, they will hurt it.

I vote NO to the proposed budget cuts to DDS.

Thank you,

Laura Riley