

I am writing to oppose the Governor's proposed cuts to the DDS Voluntary Services Program that will be voted on Friday March 6th.

My name is Lauren Sieber and my husband and I reside in Sandy Hook.

My friend and neighbor has a 14 year old daughter with autism who functions at a pre-school level. If ANY of you, close family or friends have a teenager who functions as a pre-schooler (to put it bluntly, cannot eat by herself, cannot bathe herself, is not potty trained, cannot be left alone for 5 minutes), I am sure you would vote against this cut.

I have seen my friend struggle deeply with the potential decision to put her daughter in a group home before she was given a state DDS worker. The DDS worker has literally been a lifesaver for this family, allowing my friend and her husband to function as a more normal family, attending events for their son in HS, running errands, and being involved in the community. And the DDS worker is not just a babysitter - it's someone who is qualified to support a child with special needs, setting goals and working with the family and child to achieve these goals.

By voting on these cuts, you would essentially be forcing my friend to put her daughter in a group home, which will cost the state even more.

Sincerely,
Lauren Sieber
69 High Rock Road, Sand Hook