

Testimony against the proposed budget cuts to the Department of Developmental Services.

To the Appropriations Committee:

The proposed cuts to the DDS budget will have the impact of taking fruitful and successful programs and the people who use them and turning their lives back into never-ending misery. I know that sounds dramatic, but I have seen for myself what a difference funding for developmentally disabled individuals and their families -- particularly home-care programs -- can have.

I have a very close friend whose developmentally disabled 12-year-old daughter became so difficult to handle at home that her mother ended up hospitalized herself as result of the stress and her deep despair at her inability to care for her daughter. The lack of help in her home for bathing, dressing and toileting her daughter, and to control the constant disruption her daughter caused not only to her mother, but to the entire family, was devastating for all concerned. The family considered residential treatment for her, but there were no facilities nearby and sending their daughter away would be a much more expensive and emotionally draining option for everyone.

Now, with the help of DDS funding for home-care help, everything has changed for them. The young disabled girl has become happy, stabilized, and recently graduated to the next level program at CES, the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) in Trumbull. The family has stabilized, too, and their home is filled with the joy of seeing their daughter and sister succeed, her parents able to support her and each other, and their son pursue the normal activities of teenage boys: school, sports and work. All that was impossible before. This was accomplished not from spending millions of dollars of state money, but by having the funds to hire one dedicated young woman to help in their home about four hours a day several days a week.

Not only does this funding help keep families together and disabled citizens productive, it saves more money in the long run than if the state had to pay for much more expensive rehabilitative and medical services resulting from poor care.

Please fund these crucial services that mean so much to the welfare and safety of our disabled citizens and their families.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Webster  
Fairfield, Connecticut