



To: Members of the Public Health Committee

**From: Brunilda Ferraj, Senior Public Policy Specialist
Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA)**

Re: Public Health Committee Public Hearing on S.B. 683, AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Date: March 4, 2015

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Brunilda Ferraj, Senior Public Policy Specialist at the Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA). CCPA represents community-based organizations that provide health and human services for children, adults, and families in multiple areas, including mental health, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities. Our members serve more than 500,000 Connecticut residents each year.

I am writing today in support of S.B. 683, AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, which proposes a pilot supportive housing project for persons with intellectual disabilities. As heard at the legislature in recent years, there are thousands of Connecticut citizens with disabilities waiting for residential options to become available. Though dependent on the availability of funds, S.B. 683 would make room for the state to consider and pilot innovative housing to add to a menu of residential options for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

With the state of the economy, funding to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has not allowed for the creation of enough new residential sites to serve those individuals with disabilities on the DDS waiting and planning lists. Many of these individuals and their families are desperate for options to become available, as caretakers age, yet remain without a plan for where their loved one will reside when they are no longer able to provide support for them. This failure to provide residential supports must not continue; individuals and families should be given a menu of service options from which they may choose the best suited option. As costs of living increase in the face of these growing demands, the state must work with community providers to create such a menu with innovative, effective, and cost-efficient options.

S.B. 683 would give the state an opportunity to pilot and provide additional and innovative housing options to a group of citizens in great need of residential solutions. This is of critical importance to the individuals and their families and caretakers. Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have or for additional information (bferraj@ccpa-inc.org; 860-257-7909).

Connecticut Community Providers Association

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