

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee

My name is Catherine Jortner, I live in Berlin, CT and I am the parent of a man with Down Syndrome and Autism. I would like to first thank you for raising S.B. No. 1088. I write today in support of this bill. This bill would be the first step in moving Connecticut into the future. We must ensure the future for all of CT's citizens with IDD by closing the state operated care facilities and redistributing the funds so that all of our citizens receive what they need. We are one of the few states left in the country that haven't figured out that large congregate settings are neither healthy, safe or cost effective. We don't have to invent the wheel all we need to do is look around at any one of the 14 states who have already done it. We need to redesign the way we deliver services, my son and all those like him who have been included in their families and their communities will never live in the state centers. My son has a job, friends and is a member of various clubs and organizations in Berlin. He is a valued member of his community. Andy is proof that there is no one in the institution or center that can't be taken care of better, safer and cheaper in the community. The time to act is now and I urge this committee to be the change we need in Connecticut.