

Senate Bill No 1088 Testimony 3/18/2015

I am the Reverend Kathleen Peters and I live at 65 Parker Hill Rd in Killingworth Ct (860-663-1448 [revkathyp@comcast.net](mailto:revkathyp@comcast.net)) with my husband Stanley and our 31 year old intellectually disabled daughter Sarah. I am here to speak out strongly on behalf of [S.B. No. 1088](#) that would require the development of a plan to close Southbury Training School and the regional centers. Special thanks to the I/DD caucus for raising this long overdue need to close these prohibitively expensive institutions so that more can be served.

My 64 year old cousin Carol has lived at Southbury for over 50 years and I know my aunt and uncle who are in their 90's are afraid of change but my daughter and Carol would be better served if Southbury closed and the money that is already in the DDS system was used to more equitably serve our most needy citizens. We cannot continue to pit families against each other fighting for their piece of inadequate funding. Both Carol and Sarah need your support! We know how to do this. There are drawers full of plans to close these institutions dating back to the 1990's. We know what needs to be done. Many experts can testify that Institutional living is no longer a viable or even a just solution for dealing with our family members. No one I am told who has been moved out of these intermediate care facilities to community settings has ever asked to be moved back. It is our moral duty ladies and gentlemen to care more equitably and fairly for those who cannot care for themselves! We need the will and the support of this legislature to finally get this done.

Some of you have heard this before but can you image dealing with a system whose policies say that your child will be with you until you are dead or if you do something to endanger their health and safety and then maybe you can get funding. This is an intolerable situation but it is the current reality for the over 2000 documented families who are waiting for services. My husband and I are in our 60's and it used to be a family joke that our son would get to choose our nursing home...with me in one bed and my daughter in the other...and my husband put out on the ice floe...now it doesn't seem quite as funny as it is not beyond the realm of possibility with our current dysfunctional system.

In this time of limited resources when parents and advocates are forced each year to come and beg the legislature for their piece of the pie, closing these institutions can be a viable part of the solution.

My daughter Sarah and my cousin Carol need you to feel this moral obligation to find more equitable ways to care for both of them! They need you to be leaders! They need you to act! I will beg on their behalf if I need to, but know this...I am not going away! The stakes are too high for these our children...my child, my cousin ...all our children!! Thank you!