

My name is Larry Gray and along with my wife Joan and daughter Lauren we live at 124 Laurel Ridge in East Hampton, Ct. I want to thank Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and the members of the Public Health Committee for giving me the chance to testify in support of bill **SB 1088**. I would like to thank you for raising this bill and urge you to pass it out of your committee.

Lauren was born 28 years ago with Down syndrome. Lauren currently attends a blended day program at MARC Community Resources in Middletown and is able to work at some of their job sites. She enjoys going to this program and looks forward to working because it gets her out in the community and she feels that she has a place in society just as her non-disabled family members and friends.

I am 68 years old and my wife is 64 and we live with the uncertainty of what will happen to Lauren when we are no longer able to take care of her and provide her with a place to live. Lauren will never receive residential services under the current system unless we are totally unable to care for her or suffer death and this would be the worst time for a placement into a group home for her. Can you imagine yourself having to deal with this situation? The major reason for this situation is the cost of running the state-operated facilities like Southbury. There are 2000 persons on a waiting list which includes 700 who are classified as either emergencies or people needing services within a year, and it is growing every year.

These segregated institutions for intellectually disabled adults are relics of the past. The cost of maintaining Southbury and the Regional Centers is between \$350,000 and \$442,000 a year per person. The average cost of a private group home is \$130,000 a year per person. If the State were to close Southbury and all of the public group homes the savings would be great enough to provide residential placements in private group homes for these residents and all of the people on the waiting list. Currently the State is handling the movement of Southbury residents into the community with respect and sensitivity, ensuring the continuity of services.

It is time for the closings of the institutions. It can't happen overnight but the process must be accelerated so that by the year 2020 the savings can be used to expand desperately needed services for my daughter and those on the waiting list.

Finally I would like to thank the 67 legislators of I/DD Caucus for having the courage to put forth an agenda that values the rights and dignity of people with I/DD and take concrete steps toward developing a long term plan to create a more fair, just and sustainable system for the future.