



Melissa Marshall  
10 West Normandy Dr.  
West Hartford, CT  
06107  
860-561-1089  
Melissa.[marshall@snet.net](mailto:marshall@snet.net)

Testimony: Public Health Committee  
March 18, 2015

***Raised Bill 1088: AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY***

Good morning. My name is Melissa Marshall I live in West Hartford and I'm here today in my capacity as Coordinator of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, a coalition representing people from all disability groups of all ages and family members. I'm testifying this morning in favor of Raised Bill 1088 An Act Concerning Services For People With Intellectual Disability.

This bill takes important steps towards closing institutions for people with intellectual disabilities in Connecticut. I am someone with a physical disability was been doing disability rights advocacy for people with all types of disabilities for nearly 30 years in Connecticut. When I began my career as an advocate in Connecticut, Mansfield Training School was still open. At that time there was an outcry to close institutions for people with intellectual disabilities in Connecticut. People with disabilities, family members, the legislature and the courts understood that institutions could not provide cost-effective, empowering support to individuals that live there.

Yet, decades later we continue to provide services to some individuals with disabilities in state run institutional settings. This is why Connecticut, despite having the second highest budget per capita in the country has a 2000 person waiting list for DDS services. This is why they DDS services only serve 25% of the DDS population. This is why there's no money in the DDS budget to provide families need out of family home residential support unless there is an emergency.

By passing this bill, the legislature will finally formally recognize the state institutions are overly expensive and deprive people with intellectual disabilities basic civil liberty. Institutions run contrary to the Olmstead Supreme Court decision which held that individuals with disabilities must receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate.

While the bill sets forth dates by which reports should be filed, it does not specify any dates by which institutions must begin closing or a final date by which all institutions must be closed. If institutional closure is in fact to happen, dates must be included. Institutions in Connecticut should be closed by the year 2020. This gives ample time to plan for and implement transition for current residents of institutions.

As an advocate, I'm proud that the legislature has put forth this bill. Is time to fully commit to the equality of persons with intellectual disabilities by passing this legislation with the date of 2020 included as a final closing date for institutions in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

