

March 17, 2015

Good Afternoon,

My name is Pauline Bouffard and I live in Westbrook – formerly a Meriden resident for 42 years. I am speaking in support of SB 1088 an Act concerning services for individuals with intellectual disabilities that will require the Commissioner of Developmental Services to develop a plan for the closure of intermediate care facilities.

I want to thank Senator Gerrantana, Representative Ritter and the members of the Public Health Committee for raising the bill and urge them to pass it out of their committee.

During a very difficult time in our family's life, my husband and I had to look to the Department of Developmental Services to find a safe environment for our children Heather and Sean to live. Heather found placement in an Arc of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc. home and transitioned very well and is happy today living and working with her friends. She remains well established in her community.

Sean was offered placement at Meriden Regional Center, and if we did not accept this he would go to the bottom of the waiting list. We took the placement as we did not see any other way at the time. Sean had a very difficult time adjusting. I remember going into the bedroom and washing the walls and going out to purchase curtains and matching bedspreads for Sean and his roommate. He had never shared a room with anyone, but that was not the issue, it was not an environment that he was accustomed to. It did not have that "home" feeling. We went to see him every night and brought him home every weekend. There was no place to visit with him at the center. I did mention the condition of the walls, and the floors. I was told that was being worked on. One of the staff there took the time to paint the corridor walls and put some seating so family and friends could visit with their loved one with some privacy if they wanted to. Sean lost weight, as he was used seeing his family at the table with him and we knew what he liked to eat. He could not wait to leave when I went to pick him up, and would refuse to get out of the car when I brought him back. Sean was at the Meriden Regional Center for 9 months and I can say that it was a very difficult time for him and his family. There was an opening in an Arc of Meriden-Wallingford home and Sean was placed there. He grew to love his roommates and the staff at his home. Sean was a young man with a severe developmental disability with many medical issues. He loved going out into the community to eat, attend his church, visit with family, and have fun with his friends. He had a wonderful life being part of his community. He passed away in Nov 2013, but was blessed with family and friends who loved him. So I support the S.B. No. 1088 and applaud the Public Health Committee for giving individuals with developmental disabilities and opportunity to live their lives in the community. Thank you for your time.