

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing re  
Governor's Proposed FY 2016-2017 Biennial Budget  
March 06, 2015**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak on the critical need for funding for babies, children and young and older adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Connecticut.

My name is Lolli Ross and I am Executive Director of Abilis. I am speaking out of deep concern for the 1,000 infants and toddlers, children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families living in the greater Greenwich and Stamford communities we serve annually. We are deeply troubled with the potential impact of the budget cuts on these vulnerable citizens.

- We are strongly opposed to the Governor's proposed budget cuts to DDS.
- We request that the Appropriations committee stop the cuts to DDS and restore full funding to DDS.

As one of the wealthiest states in the country, one must question what we really value. If the proposed cuts are implemented:

- Graduates who have completed their education will sit at home
- Aging parents will continue to care for their loved ones until their situation becomes an emergency causing unnecessary trauma and a greater cost to our state
- Families caring for children with significant behavioral health needs will be cut off from vital supports causing undue stress and possible job loss
- More costly services will be utilized to provide residential supports as available resources continue to diminish
- Birth to Three services (Connecticut's exemplary program that is nationally respected) faces dismantling if proposed changes to Medicaid billing are implemented.

Are there other opportunities for revenue? If we reinstate at least half of the tolls in CT or take measures to re-open weigh stations, for example, would this not create revenue that would eliminate the need for such draconian measures?

On behalf of the individuals we serve, I respectfully ask that you take measures necessary to restore funding so people with disabilities and their families can live meaningful lives.