

**Robert J. Cloonan**  
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March 5, 2015

Dear Senators, Representatives and Committee Members:

Re: Public Hearing on The DDS Budget

As the parent of two disabled adult children I thank you for the opportunity to share my written testimony with you. Your efforts to solicit input from your constituents is deeply appreciated. My hope is that you will take the more than 45 years of experience of parents who have lived with developmental disabilities into consideration as you move forward in the budgetary process.

I share my thoughts not for myself but for those who rely on you to act on their behalf. Changes must be made to the proposed DDS funding cuts outlined by our Governor.

Cuts to Day Supports and the elimination of New Services for those graduating from the educational system makes no sense whatsoever. Everyone involved with services to the disabled knows that when providers e.g. parents, educators, medical personnel, special support staff et al. have dedicated 21 years to nurturing, encouraging independence and seeing a child manage their disabilities understands that a disruption or interruption of supports can be disastrous. It can result in years of efforts being for naught. This cannot be allowed to happen. Hope is critical to these individuals future. No one fights harder to achieve normalcy, independence and acceptance than those with disabilities - and their parents.

Likewise, it has been proven that private providers are the most efficient, cost saving and effective providers of services to the disabled. Why do we keep pouring money into Southbury when we have learned through experience that alternative placements in organizations like Oak Hill and others have resulted in care, program enhancements and dedicated support of the highest level? The frustration is that this is costing dollars that could/should be spent to help others. Politics has no place when it comes to services for the disabled. Improving the lives of as many as possible should always outweigh the status quo.

Please talk to those who have the proven track record of service to those with disabilities. Visit with the Harc Inc. staff, the Oak Hill staff and parents who have walked the walk. Allow them to help. But above all else, look elsewhere for ways to eliminate the DDS shortfall. Let's be creative and let's do what in our hearts we know is the right thing to do.

Thank you.

*Bob Cloonan*