

March 6, 2015

Appropriation's Meeting

DDS Budget Cuts

My Name is Dawn DeMatteo. As a single parent of a 22 year old Son (Anthony) who is both mentally and physically disabled, I am deeply disturbed by the constant cuts to DDS. Anthony requires 24/7 care and is unable to perform any activities of daily living. He is a very active, non-vocal, individual who wears diapers and requires full hands-on assistance with bathing, dressing, eating, etc. Additionally, he cannot be left alone and has no regard for safety. While Anthony is able to walk independently, he is unstable and needs constant assistance to avoid falls and injuries. My days are spent trying to hold down a full-time job while providing care for him and his 13 year old brother, Michael. Michael is my back-up for Anthony's care and is responsible to take care of Anthony when his home health aide leaves at 6:00 until I return from work.

Having a child with a disability affects the immediate family. The effects are mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and financially. Our everyday life is nothing short of a struggle.

Anthony has been on the waiting list for numerous years as a Priority 1 with a 'level of needs' of 7 (8 being the highest). **PRIOR** (and I emphases PRIOR) to the most recent budget release and dramatic cuts to DDS, residential placement has become obsolete until the death of their caregiver.

The current release of Governor Malloy's budget and what appears to be a specific target to DDS will cause individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to suffer even more dramatically. It's disappointing that his budget did not include a plan to address the funding crisis of DDS but instead will create additional harm to families on several levels. My concern now is extended to his Day Program.

While the Governor claims he did his part and released a budget, it's now up to you, our Legislators, to work together and help the most vulnerable individuals and their families. Our quality of life depends upon your budget recommendations. We are looking to each and every one of you as our last resort for help and funding for our loved ones and immediate family members. Please give us a light at the end of our long dark tunnel ... Restore and add additional funding to DDS.

As my 13 year old Son, Michael, has stated 'My brother means everything to me and I want him to have a place to live independently when my Mom and I can make sure he's happy. He cannot wait until my Mom is not around to be taken somewhere to live. He'll be frightened and so will I. Please help our family by putting funding back into the DDS Program. *"Attacking People with Disabilities is the lowest Display of Power I can think of"*. ~ Morgan Freeman

ANTHONY DeIMORO

Age 22

