

March 6, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Dawn Lazaroff, I am the mother of Jamie Lazaroff a 38 year old man with ID/DD, as well as multiple medical and physical disabilities. I am also a retired Administrator of The Arc Quinebaug Valley, a non-profit agency in Danielson that provides supports to adults, school age children, and their families.

I remember the day Jamie was born. An intern came into my room in the hospital and without any hesitation started throwing questions at me, is anyone a Mongoloid in your family? (Yes, that's what they called Down Syndrome back then). Did you take drugs while you were pregnant? I was scared to death, what did this mean, I kept saying no, no, no! Then without any emotion or further explanation he recommended that I not take him home, he should go to a place where they can take care of him. Not take him home? Are you kidding me? Well he did come home and for the past 38 years his family and I have taken care of him and worked to have him accepted by society and help him be the best that he could. Jamie lives in his own apartment in his family home. He receives Residential Supports and Vocational Supports at his job as The Self Advocate Coordinator at The Arc Quinebaug Valley, with DDS funding. These supports are vital to his success in his daily routines at home and work. His dad and I support him in the evenings, on weekends, and during staff vacations or sick time.

If the Governor's budget is implemented it would negatively impact the day to day supports Jamie and others require to live a full, successful life. The independence he has acquired over the years will be negatively impacted. I implore you to rethink this devastating budget and to show Jamie and others that they are valued citizen of the state of Connecticut.

Dawn Lazaroff

460 North Bigelow Road

Hampton, CT 06247