

Michelle Rivelli, M.D., F.A.A.P.
22 Woodvale Road
West Haven, CT 06516



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I am the parent of a sweet 20 year old young woman with autism and intellectual disability. Her name is Jessie and she will require 24 hour supervision and support her entire life. I am speaking against the Governor's proposed budget cuts to DDS. I am appalled by the DDS budget recommendations from Governor Malloy. These recommendations include significant cuts in DDS funding for essential services such as day program funding, personal supports, home supports and residential funding. It is unconscionable that politicians in the state of CT would use our children as pawns in the game of budget bureaucracy. I am a pediatrician trying to find the time to work only 14 hours a week helping other families in the same situation. I struggle on a day to day basis to keep my daughter's life structured, meaningful and happy. This is difficult even with the support her school provides with a full time year round educational program. This will all end at the age of 21. I have been endlessly told by DDS that there is no funding for personal or family supports. I am now being told that there may not be funding for day services. In a word this would be tragic. Tragic because I would likely not be able to work even the short amount of hours I currently do. Tragic because Jessie would lose the skills that her specialized school for autism so skillfully taught her over the last 15 years. Tragic because her behavior would deteriorate and she would likely have to take additional medications to address her anxiety, rigidity and obsessive behaviors. Tragic because the relationship with my other daughter (her twin sister) and my husband would suffer due to the increased stress this would put upon our family. You ask how I know this. I know this because even by the end of her relatively brief vacation periods our family experiences these events. I can assure you that a prolonged period of time without services would be devastating. I have heard much rhetoric from various agencies and committees as well as from the Governor's office about the finances of DDS and the state of CT. I know there are many challenges that all of you face in this budget year but I ask you to stop the cuts to DDS, restore full funding to DDS, support home and community based services and fund the DDS waiting list. Additionally, funding for new graduates cannot be used as a negotiating tactic by Governor Malloy and the legislature. I urge you to educate yourself by working with your fellow legislators on the Developmental Disability Caucus as to how and where the opportunities lie to find this funding and service our community of innocents.

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