

H.B. No. 6824: An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium
Ending June Thirtieth 2017,
And Making Appropriations Therefor And Other Provisions Related To
Revenue.

Submitted By: Teresa Rostkowski, CCARC, Inc. Parent

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Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Teresa Rostkowski a Parent of CCARC, Inc. CCARC, Inc. has been a provider of services to people with disabilities and their families since 1952.

I would like to share my concerns with H.B. 6824, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefore And Other Provisions Related To Revenue. I strongly oppose the proposed cuts to the DDS budget.

Most parents say children are forever. When you are a parent of a child with a disability that is literally true and your child needs to be taken care of forever. Unfortunately that is not possible. Life happens, parents become older and often they need care themselves, doubled by the burden of taking care of their disabled child. Then there is the unavoidable life event when you are no longer around. The disabled need help from society. They are living, functioning, individuals that contribute to society as much as they can or as much as society allows them to. There are so many programs available to other individuals that are of good health and only taking advantage of society. Not to mention how much money is spent on our prison system assuring that prisoners have a good quality of life. These are criminals and they are entitled, what about the innocent that cannot take care of themselves. Our developmentally disabled population is entitled to a good quality of life and to be happy. We as a society are obligated to provide that. Good quality of life is safety, medical attention, home, food & social wellbeing. Placing an individual in some resident setting after a tragedy or typically death of a parent, is not quality of life. Unfortunately that is what is done in the state of Connecticut. This needs to be addressed and solved.

A very important part of good quality of life and happiness is social interaction. It is not enough to keep an individual well fed, warm and alive. Happiness and social well being is a big aspect of quality of life. The developmentally disabled individuals do not have any social outlet. Our society does not consider social activities to be a vital need. Everyone needs friendship, recreation and acceptance. For most individuals this is natural and does not need any type of special effort. For the developmentally disabled individuals this is not part of their everyday life. Their only outlet is a part time job or a day activity of some type that is 20 hours a week. The rest of their time is spent on a couch watching tv. They cannot pick up a book and read it, get into a car to visit friends, or go to a movie. Quite often they are not accepted by society and are looked down on in many settings. It is no wonder that these individuals have a good attendance record at work. Most of the time that's the only way they get to leave their residence and interact

with others. They are starving for friendship and acceptance. This is probably why they are always hugging and seeking attention. They need a structured program that allows them recreational outlets that is in a safe and appropriate setting. My daughter is rather high functioning and has a good part time job. When I watch her I see this need for someone to call a friend. I am so grateful to CCARC's Peers program. This program is educational and recreational that provides her and other individuals with this social outlet. She is busy and well accepted through this program and other CCARC supports.

Please do not neglect and forget our neediest population. They are entitled and well deserving of a good quality of life. This includes housing, medical care, food, and a social life. Most of all they deserve to be happy.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information.

Teresa Rostkowski
CCARC, Inc. Parent
23 Charlene Drive, New Britain, CT 06053
860-223-2460