

Testimony regarding cuts to DDS Funding

As a mother and primary caregiver to my 22 year old daughter with autism, my life revolves around ensuring that her needs are met. I work part-time so I can be home for her. When I'm not available, I make sure that someone responsible is with her to make sure that she is safe. At this time, she cannot be left alone. She will probably never be able to be left alone.

The direct and indirect economic costs of raising a child with a disability are significant. Many of those costs continue for a lifetime. The only assistance some families receive are what is allotted to them from DDS funding and SSI.

Presently, my daughter is fortunate to be attending a Day Program provided by funding from DDS. The program runs from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The workers there are caring and hardworking. My daughter is treated with respect and her safety is of primary importance to the providers of her care. Additionally, she receives much needed socialization, community involvement and continued skill development. There needs to be more programs like this one, not less.

With the rescissions made to this budget, program slots are being cut. The young adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities who will be leaving the school system in June may not have a program to attend. What will those young adults do? What happens for the single parent families who have to work **and** care for their loved one with a disability? Further cuts to the DDS budget for 2016 and 2017 are going to hurt this population.

There is no known cause for autism and the numbers of people being diagnosed are growing each year. The young adults with autism that are entering the DDS system now are just the tip of the iceberg of individuals requiring services. More services will be required, not less. Families need more support, not less.

Please do not turn your back on some of the most vulnerable members of our state and the families that care for them. We're doing our part in caring for our loved ones, but we need help.

Please NO CUTS TO DDS!

Please RESTORE RESCISSION CUTS!

Please FUND THE DDS WAITING LIST!

Thank you.

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