

Judy S. Itzkowitz, Ph.D., LLC
Educational Consultant
106 Talcott Ridge Road
South Windsor, CT 06074-2386
(860) 644-6810 (phone and fax)
(860) 670-1150 (cellular)
jsitzkowitz@cox.net (e-mail)
www.judyitzkowitz.com

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Testimony Regarding Bill #6824

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.

I am writing to communicate my opposition to Bill #6824 which would result in significant decreases in funding to the Department of Developmental Services. I am an educational consultant who has been in private practice for 27 years. I have had the privilege of supporting hundreds of young people with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other disabilities and their families throughout the state of Connecticut. I respectfully request your assistance to support a DDS budget that can more adequately support individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. When I first moved to CT in 1985, we were considered to be a progressive State when it came to DMR/DDS services. Today, the services we have for adults with intellectual disabilities are diminishing. Individuals with intellectual disabilities are educated through the age of 21; we fund those services. After graduation or age 21, many of these young people stay home, do not have opportunities to continue to learn by going to post-secondary programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, and have limited opportunities to work in real jobs earning real wages. Their lives become small and smaller, more restricted (as do the lives of their families). I see the day to day life challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and their families – they are significant. Our systems, educational and adult service systems, make their lives more challenging and stressful, resulting in greater costs (quality of life, health and well-being, financial). I respectfully request that the voices of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families be listened to and honored; that we, as a community support individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. This must be a priority. If this budget is passed, it will indicate that we do not value and regard individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. Unfortunately, the consequences will be grave for these individuals and their families; the impact will be felt by these individuals and the many people who care about them. It would be I would be pleased to speak with you or anyone else to offer my experiences, knowledge, and assistance in any way possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Judy S. Itzkowitz

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*A Commitment To Enhancing Quality of Life
Twenty-Seven Years*