

TESTIMONY OF TOM FIORENTINO

My name is Tom Fiorentino. I live in West Hartford. I have an adult child who is on the DDS waiting list for residential services. I am the co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on the DDS Waiting List.

I support Governor Malloy's nomination of Morna Murray to serve as DDS Commissioner. I believe she has the training, background and temperament to do this job.

But if the constraints put on previous commissioners are not removed, then Ms. Murray- despite her qualifications- will not succeed. And to be clear, not one of us in this room could succeed.

Connecticut remains wedded to its woefully inefficient system of delivering services to those with developmental disabilities. Public employees use 50 percent of residential funds to serve 25 percent of the population. Vastly more efficient private employees, union and non-union, serve the other 75% with the remaining 50%.

Everyone knows this is an unsustainable system that is denying services to many who desperately need them.

But previous commissioners have not been permitted to take the steps that should be taken. As a result, we continue to maintain inefficient and archaic institutions that Sen. Ted Kennedy Jr. has correctly characterized as a form of apartheid.

So long as our number one priority is the preservation of state jobs rather than the welfare of the developmentally disabled, no DDS commissioner- even one as talented as Ms. Murray- will succeed.

So while I unequivocally support Ms. Murray's nomination, I caution you that unless and until she is given the latitude to actually do her job, the problems that have plagued DDS and created the unconscionable waiting list, will continue.