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Testimony of State Representative John Hampton, 16th District, in Support of:

HB 6490 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Public Health Committee Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 4, 2015, 1:00pm
Room 1D

Chairman Ritter, Chairman Gerratana, Members of the Public Health Committee , for the record my name is John Hampton, State Representative for Simsbury's 16th District and I am here to testify in support of HB 6490 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER.

Much of this language is the same as a section 2 of HB 5558, which was before the Public Health Committee last year. This language would establish a pilot program that would allow for those with autism with the highest level of need and who are difficult to place, to have opportunities to receive services from a provider with clinical expertise in providing applied behavior analysis.

These types of individuals in most circumstances are currently placed out of state or in public institutions at a significant cost to families and the state. As you know many of our public institutions such as Southbury Training School, have been, or may be in the process of being closed and are not accepting any new clients. Hospitals in our state are also not properly equipped to deal with the special needs these individuals present on a long term basis. This leaves these individuals with a very high level of need and their families very few options if any at all.

This leaves a huge gap in services for people with autism over the age 21, who have aged out of any other programs provided. Many times these families are left on their own to deal with these challenges with insufficient support and resources. I know this is a tough budget year, however if this is done initially on a pilot level the funding would be limited and could even be a way of saving the state money as it would be less expensive than sending clients to out-of-state hospitals and far away from their families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony here today and I strongly urge passage of this bill. I would be glad to answer any questions committee members may have.

Respectfully submitted,

John K. Hampton

Some additional Facts:

- Big void right now for individuals with autism who also have severe behavioral problems.
- Nothing on the continuum of care in CT to provide services for these individuals.
- Homes have been closed in CT. Good for most to be at home, but not for all. For example
- Still 29 DDS clients ages 21 and under in out-of state residential programs. This is because other Connecticut providers have been unwilling or unable to provide needed services under the current DDS procurement system and rate structure.
- The cost per individual in those out of state facilities ranges from $94,000 to $257,000 in FY 15
- DDS's current approach is to put 3 or more individuals into an RFP. An RFP process is not appropriate for someone who is on an emergency list. CT should have an appropriate placement for those individuals when they need it; rather than waiting until potentially a year for the RFP to be awarded.
- 6490 will direct DDS to establish a pilot for those autistic individuals who have been difficult for the Department to place because of their behavioral needs. Under the pilot, those individuals would be provided with behavioral management services, training in the development of coping skills, on-site clinical oversight and other individualized services.
- In addition to providing appropriate care, while these 1:1 services may cost slightly more than the out of state care or emergency room care, because of the 50 percent Medicaid match that would be available this would actually result in a cost savings to the state.