I am submitting this testimony in support of Raised Bill Number 918- An Act Concerning the Provision of Services to Individuals with Intellectual Disability.

This bill would require the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to plan and provide services to individuals with intellectual disability who are eligible and in need of services, including individuals on the waiting list by July 1, 2017. The services include; community-based residential placements, respite care, emergency care, day programs, vocational services and in-home supports. The bill also requires DDS to identify the additional staff and cost required to provide the services.

The DDS budget has been cut by more than $43 million since November 2012. Every budget, mitigation plan and ordered rescission since then has continued to reduce funds for community providers like HARC, who support individuals with intellectual disability and their families. These cuts have continued in the context of 30 years of chronic underfunding for the same community providers supported by DDS to care for our most vulnerable citizens. It's time to establish a statewide plan to prioritize funding for individuals with intellectual disability and their families, community providers and direct care workers.

HARC is a community-based nonprofit organization in Hartford funded through the Department of DDS. It was founded in 1951 and helps over 2,200 individuals with intellectual disability and their families. HARC is a major provider of clinical and supportive programs that span the entire lifetime: early intervention (Birth-to-Three), family support, respite care, employment and day services, residential, recreation, behavioral health and elderly services.

Sincerely,
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