

James P. Donnelly

325 Bush Hill Road, Manchester CT 06040

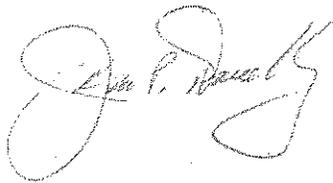
860-646-8364

Submitted Testimony

RE: Senate Bill 918 with Reference to DDS 2016-17 Budget

This document is in support of Senate Bill 918, An Act Concerning the Provision of Services to Individuals with Intellectual Disability. Although we were not present at the public hearing regarding certain reductions to the budget of the Department of Developmental Services before the Appropriations Committee, we did read very compelling testimony including the words and wisdom of longtime friends and neighbors. It did not take long to reach the sober conclusion that as the parents of persons with intellectual issues age, their anxiety increases radically. Too often, these are parents who for four or five decades have sacrificed and abandoned personal goals to serve the needs of their dependent child. They worry what will happen to that helpless offspring as their own life begins to require personal assistance. This is a burden that cannot be met by private insurance or average means. The State of Connecticut has long accepted its responsibilities for operating humane institutions and despite new modes of service delivery there is a significant gap in meeting the needs of these individuals in need. Senate Bill 918 would require the Commissioner of Developmental Services to develop a personal plan for each person requiring such services and a summary definition of the resources necessary to fully implement the plan in the next biennium.

Societies are judged not by how the strongest and smartest among us achieve but rather how the humble and the helpless are treated and assimilated. Our great state of Connecticut, despite its current budget woes, remains one of the great economies in our country. It is home to some of the brightest and wealthiest people on this planet. Finding a way to fund those in dire need is part of the complex responsibility of casting a human safety net. It is not an option; it is a moral and legal responsibility. Our Constitution requires it. As legislators, seeking the high ground on morality and humane services should always be your goal. The electorate expects it, the developmentally disabled require it, and we all need to share in paying for it. Connecticut's excellent quality of life was built on the work of prior generations of legislators who did not shrink from their responsibilities on critical issues. I am hopeful the current generation will continue that tradition.



March 11, 2015