

This is Martha Calleros of West Simsbury, CT, my family and I support SB 918. Our story begins in December of 2002, we were expecting our first child, the arrival of our daughter was filled of joy, hope, and love. Juliette was born on December 12<sup>th</sup>, the doctor said Juliette did not pass the hearing test on one ear. We took Juliette to a pediatric ENT to check her hearing. The specialist recommended ear tubes on both ears. Over the years she has had six sets of ear tubes, adenoids and tonsils removed, and the reconstruction of the ear drum caused by the ear tubes. Unfortunately, the hearing loss is only one of the many challenges she faces. We realized Juliette was not meeting developmental milestones, when she turned one year old and she was not able to talk or walk. The pediatrician referred us to the Early Intervention Program for testing. She was evaluated and found eligible to receive speech, occupational and physical therapies. Then we took Juliette to a developmental pediatrician, and she was diagnosed with autism at twenty two months of age. Our lives changed that day, a sense of helplessness and despair invaded my husband and I: Juliette has a lifelong disability, and the endless possibilities we envisioned for her one day, turned into an ocean of challenges that was drowning our family. Years later, another diagnosis came around; Juliette has Turner Syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects development in females. Our main goal for her is to have a fulfilled, productive and independent life. We need all the support that school and DDS can provide, the challenges are great, and we count on the services DDS provides. Governor Malloy's budget proposes a cut of \$13.9 million from DDS, these cuts will have a negative impact on programs that would benefit Juliette, another \$20 million cuts in the following two years will impact families like mine, who are applying for DDS funding and services for the first time, but we will be placed on a waiting list, because there is no budget to accommodate our needs. We urge you to restore the cuts and increase funding for DDS in the 2016-2017 budget. We need your help now to pass SB 918 to have a sustainable plan for the future of services for people like Juliette in Connecticut. Thank you in advance for your support. Our families can't wait!

