

March 3, 2015

TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 918**

Good Afternoon,

My name is Velma Williams-Estes. I am a member of ***Our Families Can't Wait*** and I am on the Steering Committee.

My daughter, Deborah Ann, is 47 years old and has Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, specifically, Down syndrome. Deborah has a very limited vocabulary and does not comprehend many directives as you or I might but is a very loving and beautiful young woman. She does not read, write, count or understand how to cope independently with everyday living situations. I assist her with her personal care, prepare her meals and all the other daily necessities we all have to maintain. I am her only caregiver because my husband (her Dad) passed 4 years ago and it's only the two of us now.

My concern is about Deborah's future when I'm gone; where will she live, who will provide her needed services and who will actually care ***about*** her happiness? There is no question that I am very upset with the pending budget cuts that the state has issued. There is no plan with DDS to prepare for her future. DDS is NOT fully funded and many persons with I/DD are not being serviced as they desperately need to be.

The bill before you – **Senate Bill 918**, gives you the opportunity to start in the right direction to provide for those individuals who are forgotten. It will help secure the future care of our loved ones. Let us all be on one accord as to what actions are necessary to fulfill this most important task of taking care of our most vulnerable citizens, people with **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and those who provide direct care for them. That solution would be Senate Bill 918. I therefore ask you to vote for Senate Bill 918 so that we can once again have some hope that our government is still working for ALL people no matter if they are different in any way.**

THANK YOU,

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