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Honorable members,

I regret that I cannot testify at today's Public Health hearing. I have been involved with both the private and public sector in DDS. I am a parent and advocate. I strongly urge a NO VOTE to closing all ICF facilities in CT. I agree services need to be provided and choice is important. Our Regional centers especially LFC offer to a small percentage of the DDS population (severe and profoundly disabled) a homelike atmosphere where their needs can be met all in a timely fashion, 24 hour on site nursing. They go out into the community for recreation, shopping and community events.

Why is congregate settings completely acceptable for the elderly and not the disabled?

Several states are now proposing for their disabled population an assisted living facility. It is privately run, has family involvement and choice of experiences. Please consider what we are doing. Southbury has the reputation of the past. I believe several of those placed as a child would not have been there if their parents had birth to three! pretty school and IDEA. They would have remained home with their families. The issue is the future and how can these parents age gracefully and assist their disabled adult children to a life without them. Please consider all possibilities before you go down this path. No beds can be filled on our beautiful Campus, thru attrition we are down from 72 to 57. Did you know that DDS emergencies are sent with a staff to a hotel until they find placement? Is that at all fair to the client when there are empty beds with well trained staff that could be used for transition to the Community. Thank you for your patience. I would invite you at any time to visit lower Fairfield regional center in norwalk I would be glad to show you the possible safety net for the future.

In appreciation,
Cindy Stramandinoli