

**Richard D. Rothstein  
Public Health Committee Testimony  
March 18, 2015**

**Support for SB-1088**

**An Act Concerning Services for Individuals with Intellectual Disability**

**My name is Richard D. Rothstein and I live in West Hartford. I would like to thank the Public Health Committee for holding a public hearing on this bill. I am the father and plenary guardian for my 32 year old son, Spencer, who has intellectual disability, autism and many complex medical issues. Spencer has been placed in an appropriate DDS residential program since 1991 and he is doing extremely well.**

**I am testifying today in support of SB 1088, An Act Concerning Services for Individuals with Intellectual Disability. The bill requires the Commissioner of the Developmental Services to develop and implement a plan to close all state-operated intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.**

**It is now 2015. We are in the fifth decade following the filing of the initial lawsuit challenging the suitability of housing individuals with intellectual disabilities in institutional settings. In the past, there have been bursts of progress as services have moved into small, community settings and meeting the needs of those living with their families. In 1993, Mansfield Training School was closed. More than twenty years later, Southbury Training School and the regional centers remain open. While the census at Southbury has decreased over time, due to deaths of residents and some movement to community settings, there remain approximately 300 residents there. Approximately 45 of these residents (and their guardians), have requested placement in community settings which have not yet been accommodated. The census at the regional centers remains at a very high level as well.**

**In addition to the issues created by and inappropriateness of segregated settings, the costs of operating Southbury Training School and the regional centers on a per resident basis is astronomical as compared to the cost of community settings, particularly with nonprofit providers.**

**Since the early 1990's, a disproportionate portion of DDS operating and capital budgets have been devoted to maintaining Southbury Training School and the regional**

centers. Over this time period, the waiting list for residential (and some other) DDS services has grown considerably. There are now some 2,000 families waiting for some type of residential services alone.

Some on the waiting list, including many categorized as Priority One, have been waiting for more than a decade. This is an extraordinary burden on families who have cared for their children and other family members. In some cases, until parents are in their 70's. Younger parents have had to sacrifice their careers and not give their other children the attention that they need and deserve for their education and development.

In March 1994, the DDS Commissioner released a Southbury Planning Committee report, calling for the closure of Southbury Training School within five years. In December 2011, the legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee issued recommendations for dealing with these and other issues affecting services provided by the DDS which included accelerated phase out of Southbury Training School and the regional centers. It is my understanding that no action has been taken by the legislature or DDS with regard to the recommendations of the PRI report.

It is long past time for a plan to be developed and implemented for DDS. Please issue a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Richard D. Rothstein