



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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### Testimony

#### **HB 5128: An Act Concerning Funds Appropriated to the Department of Developmental Services**

#### **Public Health Committee**

**February 16, 2016**

Good morning, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to deliver testimony on HB 5128, An Act Concerning Funds Appropriated to the Department of Developmental Services.

This bill requires that all funds appropriated to DDS that are unexpended at the end of fiscal years 2016 and 2017 remain available for expenditure by the department. During this time of extreme budgetary distress for the state, it is critical to ensure that intellectually disabled people and their families receive adequate support and services. That is not the case today, and this population is growing.

I absolutely support the bill, but I would like to make two suggestions that I think would improve it:

- I recognize that it is not necessarily possible or desirable to include language that would constrain legislators in future cycles. Nevertheless, the needs of this population are serious enough to warrant provisions for the future. I therefore ask the Committee to consider including language that would require review and consideration of this provision at the time each biennial budget is developed and passed.

- As written, I believe the language of the bill would allow the legislature, in developing the 2018-2019 budget, to consider the unexpended funds remaining in the DDS budget as part of its budget going forward. If the budget process changes significantly between now and then, as it might, this comment may be less relevant. But if the current services method or something similar is preserved or restored, this would be an important issue, because it might lead to a future decrease in the DDS appropriation for the next biennium. I therefore ask the Committee to consider including language that would prevent such a future budget reduction resulting from the passage of this bill.

I thank the Committee for its attention to this important bill, and respectfully ask its consideration of these recommendations.