

Testimony of the Reverend Kathleen Peters to the Committee on Public Health in favor of  
Raised H.B. No. 5128 - AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

February 16, 2016

Good morning members of the Public Health Committee. My name is the Reverend Kathleen Peters and I am a resident of Killingworth CT. (65 Parker Hill Rd. 860-663-1448 revkathyp@comcast.net) I have come to speak in favor of raised house bill 5128 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDS APPROPRIATED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, on behalf of my daughter Sarah and my cousin Carol both of whom have intellectual disabilities. Special thanks to Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter for raising this important bill.

Both Sarah and Carol are among the “lucky” state residents with disabilities who are receiving services that currently meet their needs. Sarah because her father and I fought hard i.e. yelled and screamed to make her needs known and finally in the fall of 2015 at age 32 she moved to a supported living arrangement where she is flourishing beyond all of our expectations. My 65 year old cousin Carol moved to Southbury Training School when she was 10 years old. She is currently waiting for a placement outside of that institutional setting as it has been recognized by many experts that she can and will flourish out in the community. Carol is non verbal but Sarah tells me all the time to keep fighting so that all her friends, especially her friend Paul, can have a place like she does. “Luck” should not be the standard. Care of those who cannot care for themselves all by themselves is what a caring governmental system needs to be about!

It is criminal that at least 2000 of our citizens are waiting for residential services yet we still operate under a system that “gives back” unused money in one part of the DDS budget when there are overwhelming needs in another portion of that same budget. And who knows how many have just not tried to get services because they see their chances as being nonexistent.

It seems beyond ludicrous to me that there are waiting lists for most DDS services yet money is being returned to the general fund from other line items. Seems akin to me giving money back to my employer because I have not used all the funds budgeted for oil as the price is lower than expected rather than paying my electricity bill with those funds.

It is truly unconscionable that money from the DDS budget is returned when there are so many unmet needs. Please vote yes on this bill so that funds appropriated to the Department of Developmental Services that are unexpended at the end of fiscal years remain available for expenditure by the department for services for real people like Sarah and Carol and especially Paul who are counting on you to make sure that they have the help they need!

Please also consider raising the comprehensive "DDS Family's Rights Bill" proposed by Representative Demicco so that all families can fight for their loved ones with full information and support.

Thank you! Respectfully submitted, Kathleen Peters