

CT COMMUNITY NONPROFIT ALLIANCE



formerly



To: Members of the Human Services Committee

From: Ben Shaiken, Public Policy Specialist, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance

Re: Public Health Public Hearing on S.B. 294: AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.

Date: March 2, 2016

Good morning distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Ben Shaiken, Public Policy Specialist at CT Community Nonprofit Alliance. CT Community Nonprofit Alliance represents more than 550 community nonprofit organizations and associations across the state and is the largest advocacy organization representing community nonprofits in Connecticut. Our members serve more than 500,000 Connecticut residents each year.

I'm here to testify in support of S.B. 294, An Act Concerning Services for Individuals with Intellectual Disability. I want to thank the leaders of the Public Health Committee for raising this and so many other important issues this year.

As you know, the bill strengthens statutory language requiring the state to develop a plan to close Southbury Training School and the regional centers operated by the Department for Developmental Services (DDS). Southbury Training School and the regional centers are institutions, and with what we know today about how to properly support **community inclusion for everyone** with an intellectual and developmental disability, **there is no reason they should remain open.**

For decades, community nonprofits have been helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live healthy, fulfilling lives in the community. **With proper supports, people with developmental and intellectual disabilities can flourish. A class of people formerly segregated to institutions have been fully integrated into communities.**

Further, that Connecticut maintains institutions runs counter to federal regulation and law. On March 17, 2019, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) Rule is scheduled to be implemented. The HCBS Rule mandates full community integration and choice for people with disabilities. A similar level of integration is also required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and upheld by the United States Supreme Court in *Olmstead v. L.C.*

Simply put, living life fully integrated in the community is not only better for individuals, it is required by federal law.

For decades, community nonprofits have been helping individuals living in Southbury Training School and the regional

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centers—as well as now-closed institutions—transition successfully into the community. **However, community nonprofits can only help if the state pays them enough to hire and train quality staff, buy or lease, renovate and maintain proper homes, and continue to innovate services to assist people in the community now and in the future.**

Current rates for nearly every service leave nonprofits facing financial losses for each hour they support people. Rates have stayed flat or been decreased for a decade and are constant targets for budget cuts and rescissions.

Stability and economic vitality are critical to community nonprofits' ability to successfully transition individuals, especially individuals with the advanced needs and age of many Southbury Training School and regional center residents, into the community. In the long-term, the savings the state will achieve by moving individuals into community settings will likely cover the cost of paying adequate rates for the service.

Community providers stand ready to partner with the state, as we have for many years, to make transitions as smooth as possible for Southbury Training School and regional center residents and their families. Because community nonprofits already provide supports to thousands of individuals that are integrated in many communities across the state, they are nimble, adaptable and ready and willing to work together succeed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at bshaiken@ctnonprofitalliance.org