STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

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HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

Testimony on House Bill 294
Public Health Committee
March 2, 2016

Chairmen Gerratana and Ritter, Ranking Members Markley and Srinivasan, and Members of the Public Health Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for raising Bill Number 294: An Act Concerning Services for Individuals With Intellectual Disability.

This bill is very important to our State and our citizens, and if passed, will require the Commissioner of Developmental Services (DDS) to take certain actions relating to DDS' waiting list; requires the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to consult with certain stakeholders on plans to cease operations at facilities operated by DDS; and to require advance notice prior to discontinuing eligibility for state assistance for an individual with an intellectual disability.

First and foremost, the health and welfare of our citizens must be preserved and supported. This proposal will afford basic notice requirements and rights to our neediest citizens. Providing notice of changes to a person's way of life and the quality of their care they receive, especially if such notice involves the discontinuance of state assisted care, is a right that each and every recipient of such care deserves. I fully support these portions of Raised Bill 294.

Section 2 of the bill includes a proposal to change the plan that was a part of the Deficit Mitigation act that passed in December. Under Raised Bill 294, OPM would be required to consult with people in the intellectually disabled community in the process of crafting a plan to close expensive institutional facilities. This provision would give Intellectually Disabled stakeholders a voice in the planning process that is not afforded to them under current law.

Providing our most vulnerable citizens with basic notice rights and the status of their healthcare accommodations is essential, and respectfully, is the right thing to do. Further, it is imperative that OPM take all necessary steps to work with the appropriate parties in order to develop a practical and workable plan on how to approach the Southbury Training School. It is for this reason that I urge the Public Health Committee to pass Raised Bill Number 294, "An Act Concerning Services for Individuals with Intellectual Disability."