

Testimony
James E. Quick, Past President, CT State Rehabilitation Council and CT State Independent Living Council
Appropriations Committee, Thursday, February 11, 2016

My name is James Quick and I'm the past President of the Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council and of the Connecticut State Independent Living Council.

I'm vehemently opposed to the Governor's proposed budget proposal to eliminate funding for the five Centers for Independent Living. The Centers for Independent Living are the foundation of independent living services for people with disabilities in CT and serve well over 1,000 individuals every year. Eliminating the centers from the budget is an affront to people with disabilities at a time when other major human services are also being cut.

The Independent Living Centers are small non-profits that can't survive with a collective \$497,290 cut. The cut will result in \$99,458 per center, which means that staff will be laid-off and possibly a center or two may need to close. This will result in people with disabilities having less services and less resources to live, work and thrive independently. **Can we afford to do this at a time when other critical pieces of our safety net are also being cut?**

Independent Living Centers are central and key partners in programs and initiatives like Money Follows the Person, Community Choices, Youth Transition services, and our Pre-Vocational opportunities, to name a few. **A 100% reduction in the state funds has a significant and detrimental ripple effect.** Not only will the cuts impact services to hundreds of people with disabilities annually, it will also significantly limit the ability of Independent Living Centers to fully implement other programs and services directly related to nursing home transition, aging and disability resources, housing assistance, pre-employment services, youth transition and transportation, all of which ultimately save the state money and assist people with disabilities to fully participate in the community, work force and life.

I urge the Legislature to fully restore full funding for Independent Living Centers so that people with disabilities can continue to live, work and thrive independently.

