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My name is Bob Gorman and I reside in the CT 63rd district. I have been an Independent Living Advocate at Independence Northwest in Naugatuck for the past eighteen years. We are one of the five Centers for Independent Living in Connecticut (CILs).

Our center serves 44 towns throughout Northwestern Connecticut. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) provide direct services to all individuals with a disability or aging in the community. We offer a myriad of services that are unique in that it would be very difficult to find another agency to provide the services that CILs do for consumers on a regular basis.

For over 25 years CILs have helped the state's most fragile and vulnerable population navigate a very confusing and complex system to allow them to live in the community they choose. Finding safe and affordable housing, transportation, applying for state and federal benefits, SNAP, Medicare and Medicaid issues, advocating for system change and individual advocacy are some of the services CILs provide.

Here are some true examples of consumers I have assisted over the last couple of months:

- Financially assisted a consumer who recently had his right lower leg amputated to have his gas pedal moved to the left side of his brake in order to continue driving.
- Assisted consumers to sign up for Medicare and choose the appropriate prescription plan to accommodate their needs.
- Advocated successfully for an 80 year old living in a condominium to be assigned a parking space in front of her home to accommodate her disability.
- Provided assistance for a consumer whose wife recently passed away to avoid foreclosure of his home by enrolling him in a program through Connecticut Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA).
- Resolved a conflict with the mother of an Autistic child who refused to send her child to school unless he was assigned to a teacher that the mother preferred. I successfully mediated this issue between the school system and the mother.

Our center relies on state funding to continue our much needed services. Governor Malloy eliminated all funding to the CILs in the amount of \$528,680 in his budget released last week. I realize Connecticut has a major fiscal issue that needs to be resolved. It cannot be fixed by eliminating CIL funding that serves individuals, who through no fault of their own, have a disability and/or have aged and need these services to remain independent.

Our services are vital and cannot be eliminated!

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