

Testimony – Robin Mitchell
Appropriations Committee
February 11, 2016
Department of Rehabilitation Services

My name is Robin Mitchell and I live in Waterbury, CT. I am here today to tell you why you should not eliminate funding for the Independent Living Centers.

Just over a year ago, I had an accident, which resulted in me being in a coma. I now have some cognitive deficits, which include memory loss. After my hospitalization, I was admitted to a nursing home in Waterbury in May 2015. I was often reminded that I was going to be discharged from the nursing home soon, and I was worried because I had nowhere to go. It was during my time at the nursing home that the social worker told me about the Money Follows the Person Program and referred me to them for help. I was connected to a team of people who gave me hope and told me it was possible to get back on my feet again. I had lost the connection with my family so they were unable to help me with the things I needed most.

The team I am connected to works out of Independence Northwest, Inc. an independent living center in Naugatuck CT. I have a transition coordinator and housing coordinator. Both have helped me immensely to see that independence is possible.

I was in the nursing home for 8 months and next week, I will be given the keys to my own apartment! I don't know what I would have done without these people who work for Money Follows the Person Program. They have given me my life back! They have done this for me and many other people disabled people around the state of Connecticut. The centers help us to maintain our independence and are there to provide peer-to peer-support, and connect us with other services. Without their help, I wouldn't have been able to obtain the rental assistance, which now makes my housing affordable. They were able to understand me, when I thought no-one else could.

They are a lifeline to many people in the Valley area. Without them, I am sure I would have been discharged to a shelter and would have had to

spend my days on the streets until the shelter opened again. I am incredibly appreciative of how much they have helped me. And because I have had this experience, I am sure there are many who can say the same thing. The work they do is important, so please do not terminate funding to the Independent Living Centers.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted by:
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