

Testimony Submitted to the Human Services and Appropriations Committee:

Governor's Bill No. 17 LCO 00648

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES.**

Submitted By: Heather Marquis, Director of Residential Services, Goodwill of Western and Northern CT

February 11th, 2016

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Human Services and Appropriations Committee, my name is Heather Marquis and I am writing you on behalf of my organization, Goodwill of Western and Northern CT. Goodwill has had the privilege of providing services through the ABI waiver since its inception in 1999. We currently serve over 70 individuals who are brain injury survivors. We also provide statewide services to individuals with developmental disabilities through Connecticut's waivers. Goodwill's community impact extends to over 22,734 Connecticut residents with over a million hours services in 2015 alone. We are among the 550+ member agencies of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (CT Nonprofit Alliance.)

The majority of services we provide are done through Connecticut's Medicaid waivers. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of our participants' incredible journeys towards further independence. Goodwill, as part of the nonprofit community remains committed to high quality services for our participants.

I would like to take this opportunity to share our concerns with the Governor's proposal to repeal the Connecticut General State Statute Sec. 17b-8; the statute that states that the Commissioner of Social Services shall submit an application for a federal waiver and any proposed amendment to the Medicaid state plan to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly (Human Services and Appropriations).

This statute assures that, in addition to legislative review, there is to be a public hearing. At the conclusion of a public hearing the joint standing committees shall advise the commissioner of their approval, denial, or modifications of the commissioner's waiver application or proposed amendment. This is the only formally recognized process where we all have an opportunity to

voice our concerns and share ideas of what works. If 17b-8 is repealed, this essentially takes away the public voice and ability to give input about the very services and programs they utilize. Currently individuals with brain injuries, family members, providers and advocates have the opportunity to be heard and give input when changes are being considered to waiver programs.

Good government includes a system of checks and balances to help assure that all voices are heard. The idea of any state agency having unilateral decision making power over the services of a very vulnerable population is concerning. The loss of input from those receiving, providing and supporting services would be an injustice to the person centered process that we have come to tirelessly support in the state of Connecticut. Please do not let these voices be silenced. Prevent the repeal of Connecticut General State Statute Sec. 17b-8.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information.

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