

**Testimony to the Appropriations Committee on H.B. No. 5044 –  
AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE  
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017**

I would like to thank you, Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to speak **in opposition of H.B. No. 5044 – An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017**. My name is Ronald Langner. My wife and I live in Tolland with our 29 year old son, Scott, who receives services from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

I am speaking in opposition of the portion of H.B. No. 5044 which proposes to cut an additional \$59 million from the DDS budget! This is in addition to the \$50 million which has already been cut from the DDS budget in the past 3 years, and has resulted in a significant reduction in community-based Residential Services or Day & Employment Services, These services are some of the most important and needed services provided by DDS. There are currently 100 people waiting for community-based Day & Employment Services. This represents the beginning of a **new waiting list**. Any further cuts to these supports could result in new high school graduates being left without any funding when they graduate in June 2016! This would have a devastating effect on the lives of families which have been promised that these services would be available when their loved ones reached 21 years old and graduated from the local school systems.

There is a growing list of over 2,000 people on the DDS Waiting List for Residential Services. Over the past year little has been done to address this shameful issue. In order to address this Waiting List additional funds not funding cuts are needed. Some of the needed additional funds could be made available if the Governor and Legislators mandated more efficient use of DDS funds. It has long been recognized that closing the antiquated public institutions (five Regional Centers and Southbury Training School) which consume an exorbitant amount of the DDS residential funding would result in significant savings. It has been estimated by the Families for Families Leadership Committee at The Arc Connecticut that approximately \$90 million in savings could result in moving from State run institutional system to private providers.

Governor Malloy indicated in his budget address to the Legislature in early February, 2016 that providing community services for the I/DD population is a priority. Proposing to cut an additional \$59 million from the DDS budget is not consistent with that statement. I am asking the Appropriations Committee to reject the \$59 million reduction to the DDS budget.