

Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
February 16, 2016

Testimony related to H.B. 5044

My name is Win Evarts and I reside in New Canaan with my wife and three children. Our oldest son is 25 years old and has a seizure condition and intellectual and developmental disabilities ("I/DD"). We are one of the many families that are trying to build meaningful lives for our adult family members with a disability.

We do not support H.B. 5044 for the following reasons:

1. The bill proposes \$59 million in cuts to the Department of Development Services budget representing a combination of current year expenditure cuts, current year lapses and current year budget savings givebacks. Cutting current year expenditures will only increase the Waiting Lists for Residential and Day/Vocational Services causing individuals with disabilities, their families and the private providers that serve 88% of the state further hardship. Removing lapses and current year budget savings from DDS's budget will remove the only resources that are being brought to bear on unmet needs.
2. The bill proposes an "I/DD Partnership" to expand supportive housing and develop strategies to fund the Waiting Lists. While these are some of the main priorities for Connecticut citizens with disabilities, concrete actions like not cutting DDS's budget, curbing excessive service costs and overtime in state run facilities, and mandating that DDS budget lapses and budget savings be transparently used to meet system needs would be far more helpful to both citizens and agency performance.
3. The bill does not focus any attention on the estimated \$90 million of long-term budget savings that can be realized through closure of DDS-run institutions. Southbury Training School and the Regional Centers represent the most expensive service solutions on per person served basis that DDS funds. When 20% of the overall population needing services can't get them, all the alternatives to generate resources should be evaluated.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of all the citizens and taxpayers of Connecticut.

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