

**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 Collette Bement Langner. My husband and I live in Tolland with our 29 year old son, Scott, who receives employment services from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Our family was one of the fortunate Wait List Initiative families that qualified for residential funding in April 2014. However, it will be more than 2 ½ years of waiting after residential funding was first allocated to Scott before he can realize his dream to move into the community in September, 2016, and the reason -- so few people have been allocated residential funding from DDS that appropriate roommates were impossible to find. In FY 2015, only eleven people, who were not considered to be “Emergencies”, received funding from DDS for residential services.

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 for him, but he has cut more than \$50 million from the DDS budget in the past 3 years and H.B. No. 5044 will cut an additional \$59 million from the DDS budget! Even more appalling is the fact that most of the cuts to the DDS budget have come from the community-based Residential Services or Day & Employment Services, meaning these cuts directly affect persons with I/DD.

There are currently 100 people on the DDS Day & Employment Services Waiting List and more than 2,000 people on the DDS Waiting List for Residential Services, some who have been waiting for decades. The governor’s proposed budget adjustments will result in the lengthening of both of these waiting lists, with no end in sight! How can the Governor possibly think that these additional cuts to the DDS budget show his “priority” concern for the I/DD community? This budget adjustment will likely mean that new high school graduates will be left without any funding for Day & Employments Services when they graduate in June 2016!

Instead of further cuts to the DDS budget, Governor Malloy should close the antiquated, outrageously expensive public institutions (five Regional Centers and Southbury Training School) that use up an exorbitant amount of the DDS residential funding. In a review of FY 2015 state expenditures, a parent research group from the Families for Families Leadership Committee at The Arc Connecticut discovered that total expenditures at STS were more than \$106 million for 291 residents (\$365,000/resident), while the total expenditures at the five Regional Centers were \$79,229,068 for 177 residents (\$447,616/resident). The closing of these public institutions could net approximately \$90 million to fund additional residential services in private community settings, while also serving all of the current residents of these facilities as

well as drastically reducing the size of the Residential Waiting List by providing residential funding for 1,000 individuals. The Governor is already cognizant of the inflated cost of state-operated facilities, as evidenced by his decision to privatize 37 of the 68 public group homes in the state. His decision acknowledges the fact that the highly qualified private providers in our state can deliver quality care at considerably lower cost. If the I/DD community is truly a priority for Governor Malloy, then the inefficiencies in the DDS budget should be eliminated and additional cuts to the DDS budget should be avoided at all costs!