

February 17, 2016

Testimony re: Proposed Budget Impacting Health and Human Services

Dear Governor Malloy and The Appropriations Committee,

This is a plea to the governor of Connecticut to curtail any proposed budget that further threatens the health and well-being of those Connecticut residents who are developmentally and intellectually disabled. Of all groups these are the people that are the neediest of the needy. They have little capability for managing themselves physically, mentally, and socially without support. Our son falls into this category. Bobby, thankfully now is part of the Ability Beyond organization. He is now 31 years old and when he was born he was diagnosed Trisomy 8 Mosaic (a chromosome disorder that combines normal and abnormal cells). Throughout his life at home he has had many many surgeries. Those surgeries included such areas as neurological, kidney, hips, legs, and bowel, to name a few. Consequently Bobby is nonverbal, non-mobile without assistance, and developmentally challenged. Yet he remains a bright, intuitive, and loving young man. It would be impossible for him to live on his own. He is the type of young man that could not survive without the kind of services that an organization like Ability Beyond so capably provides. Bobby clearly is representative of most of the consumers that Ability Beyond cares for. The particular home that Bobby requires inside the Ability group is an ICF (intermediate care facility) which means nursing services are necessary for his care. He requires intermittent catheterization at least three times daily plus his medications.

Additional spending cuts will definitely impact the quality and delivery of human services for people like Bobby. The proposed budget takes direct aim toward the most vulnerable people who do not have the individual ability to improve their situation. They are 100% dependent. Substantial cuts have already been made. Connecticut's community of nonprofits deliver the States core services and continue to be forced to operate underfunded. Funding for these absolutely necessary services has been decimated. Fundamentally, it should be nonnegotiable when it comes to budgets that we must take care of our disabled population.

Historically, Connecticut always proved that it supported the needs of people like Bobby. We ask on his behalf and on the behalf of all people like Bobby to please continue to support those organizations that are directly responsible for his well-being. We're lost without them.

Thank you for your anticipated support.

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