

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

I work for a Non-Profit named Community Residences, Inc. We are funded by DCF, DSS and DDS. Below you will find more about our agency and how the proposed budget cuts will effect our company which does great things for the clients we serve. Might I add we do it at a fraction of the price that the state homes do. We have not had a raise is several years due to the fact our budget tends to get cut every year. Mean while we are paying a lot of money for a bus system that people are riding for free or riding to go to bars. I am all for college kids who decide to party in Hartford to be responsible and not drive but I don't think this should cost the state tax payers what this bus system is costing us. I feel that while our political leaders want Connecticut's transportation systems to catch up with Boston's or New Yorks, I feel it's a waste of money as there are large amounts of people leaving the state due to High taxation and loss of jobs. Now the bus system is costing us a lot and forcing us to pay such high taxes. Instead of cutting budgets for DDS, DCF and DSS why don't we take it from the DOT and the bus system? Or take it from the State run group homes as they are costing us more Money then organizations such as the one I proudly work for. Another way to save money is to stop giving full health benefits to state workers for life. I get you need to provide benefits just like every other place of employment, but they can offer the same crappy benefits we get. Why should I get crappy Benefits and pay taxes so someone at the state gets awesome benefits. Is that fair. Please remember my benefits are determined on the state budget. My company give us the best Benefits they can, It's the state budget cuts that effect the level of benefits we get which are crappy. I beg you please stand up and fight for us as we do a lot of good things and just ask to be treated fairly and cutting your budget year after year while other state agencies don't get the same treatment is not fair.

Community Residences Inc. (CRI) which is a large not-for-profit Agency that provides services to children and adults with special needs under contracts with DDS, DCF and DSS. We are among the 550+ member agencies of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (CT Nonprofit Alliance.)

We the 1000 staff strong at CRI are very concerned about what impact the Governor's 2017 State Budget will have on the hundreds of children and adults that this Agency currently serves on a daily basis and on the thousands that are in

need of services but are not currently receiving them. We are particularly concerned about the following:

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

- Group homes provide essential therapeutic services to children removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or other high risk circumstances.
- The DCF federal court monitor warned that the reduction of congregate care capacity without sufficient reinvestment in community based services will jeopardize the well-being of CT's children.
- Further eliminating treatment options for children, such as STAR Homes and Therapeutic Group Homes, will only exacerbate the currently strained system. As these programs close, outpatient clinics, which are already at capacity, will be flooded with children who would otherwise require a higher level of care. Or worse, children with nowhere to turn may fall through the gaps, closed off from services that would otherwise improve their well-being.

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (DDS)

- In annualizing the FY 2016 Deficit Mitigation and Lapses, the Governor is cutting millions from Employment Opportunities and Day Services, Behavioral Support Programs and opportunities for people to live in the community.
- The Transfer of funding for the Community Residential Services line from DDS to the Department of Social Services and a change from grant-funded service provision to fee-for-service billing.
 - a. This change reflects a transfer of \$537,111,053 from DDS to DSS, or nearly half of the total DDS Operating Budget in FY17.
 - b. Part of this proposal is the creation of an Intellectual Disabilities Partnership, with a similar model to the Behavioral Health Partnership. We support this aspect of the Governor's proposal.
 - c. This proposed shift to DSS has the potential to create positive change in the provision of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with two very important caveats:
 - adequate rates **inclusive of increased wages for not-for-profit staff** and Community nonprofits **must** be at the table in developing the transition plan.

- This budget would also transfer DDS' Autism Division to DSS. This presents concerns in light of recent and ongoing issues with various Waiver services currently administered by DSS.
- The budget would convert Residential Community Living Arrangements from Public to Private Nonprofits. We support this shift. The state must pay adequate rates, **inclusive of increased wages for not-for-profit staff**, in order for services to be delivered effectively.

In addition to the above, CRI is very concerned regarding the Governor's **\$60 million** cut to the combined block grant "Agency Operations" account at DCF and DDS. There is no assurance that these two agencies would be required to evenly distribute these cuts across all programs. This cut could disproportionately fall on, and in some cases completely eliminate, critical programs that serve some of the neediest children and adults in Connecticut

Thank you

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