



TESTIMONY OF
RAYMOND G. BALDWIN, JR.
PRESIDENT/CEO OF ST. VINCENT'S SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES
SUBMITTED TO THE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

PROPOSED BILL NO. 419, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROPERTY TAX
EXEMPTION FOR NONPROFIT GROUP HOMES

Good afternoon, my name is Raymond Baldwin Jr., and it is my privilege to serve as President and CEO of SVSN services, a non-profit organization headquartered in Trumbull, CT. I'm here to speak in support of Senate Bill 419.

Imagine you are parents who have a special needs child -- Your son or daughter born without the ability to speak and/or move their arms or legs. You want this child to reach their full potential, to have a life filled with hope, promise, learning and love.

That's what St. Vincent's Special Needs Services has provided for more than 60 years to hundreds of children and adults from more than 33 Connecticut cities and towns. Many of our children and adults have cerebral palsy and multiple complex medical conditions. Most cannot speak... Most cannot walk or move without significant assistance.

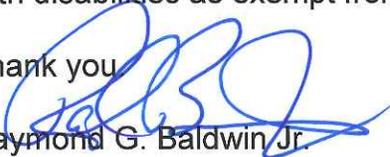
St. Vincent's provides residential home care for 66 children and adults in seven (7) cities/towns, a State licensed school for 84 special needs students, adult day care for 180 individuals and job placement opportunities for dozens of adults. Our staff lovingly provides a special type of compassionate care to our children and adults, and views their work as a labor of love.

In the past 5 years, our program and many others like ours have received no cost of living increases from the State. In addition we are now also faced with the governor's proposal to impose a cut in the funding we currently receive from the state. As a consequence private providers, such as ours, are struggling to keep our doors open. We provide a wide array of quality services for a very challenged population at **1/2 the cost the State pays for the same services at our State institutions.** With efforts underway to close Southbury Training School private providers need to be supported and assisted to remain financially viable.

Recently the tax assessors in a few cities/towns have interpreted CT State Statute 12-81(7)(B)iii as allowing their municipalities to tax nonprofit group homes which house

people with disabilities. They have drawn a fine distinction between temporary vs. permanent homes that house persons with disabilities. This added financial burden (a loss of \$100K) will, along with other DDS cuts, serve to destroy our safety net for persons with intellectual and physical disabilities. The towns involved will not experience a revenue loss as these group homes were not previously taxed. Please correct this misinterpreted Statute by clearly defining nonprofit group homes for persons with disabilities as exempt from municipal real estate taxes by voting for Senate Bill 419.

Thank you



Raymond G. Baldwin Jr.
President/ CEO St. Vincent's Special Needs