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State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

February 24, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Morna Murray, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and I appreciate the opportunity to comment on **S.B. No. 126 AN ACT CONCERNING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM.**

The bill requires the Commissioners of DDS, Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Department of Labor (DOL) to develop a plan to implement an internship program for persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). While DDS is supportive of increasing internship and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including ASD, the state does not have the fiscal and staff resources to dedicate to the development or implementation of an additional initiative.

Other DDS programs that relate to internship and employment opportunities for individuals with ASD include the operation of the Medicaid lifespan waiver for individuals with ASD who do not have intellectual disability. Services provided under this waiver include job coaching, community mentoring, life skills coaching, and behavioral supports.

Although the Governor's budget proposes moving the lead agency status for ASD to DSS, DDS, as a member of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council, will continue to coordinate with sister agencies to identify and provide priority services for persons with autism spectrum disorder.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on **S.B. No. 126.** You may contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with any questions.