Dear Senator Gerratana and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Diana Mennone from Woodbury and I am writing to you in support of:

**S.B. #38**
**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY**

**S.B. #39**
**AN ACT CONCERNING A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE QUALITY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.**

Although I am not familiar with all the specifics of these proposed bills, I want to support prevention of disruption to current residents of public facilities for people with intellectual and developmental disability. My brother has lived at Southbury Training School (STS) for almost 40 years. Continuing to respect both the people who want to live there and the informed choices of legal guardians are paramount. Certain groups in the State of CT have wrongly assumed that by simply moving everyone out of the public facilities the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will have the answer to all their budgetary problems. It is not a simple “everyone can live in the community” answer but rather a very complicated and costly endeavor in a fiscally strapped climate. The continuum of care necessary is extremely diverse. The small percentage of people living in public facilities have lived and aged past their life expectancies at STS. My brother has a rare disorder (nationally recognized as 1 in 25,000 - 35,000) and medical professionals have commented on how well he is doing considering his advanced age and diagnosis. This is in part because of the wonderful care he receives by the well trained, veteran staff at STS who are his second family. He requires a high level ICF/DD-level of care which translates to a high level of consistent support and does include integration to the extent possible with the surrounding community-based events and activities. Integration is reciprocal with many community citizens supporting the training school’s businesses (Day Program/Employment Opportunities - Greenhouse, Farm, dog biscuit sales, etc.) and two Thrift Shops run by community volunteers to benefit the residents of STS.

In order to support the continuum of care options, improve jobs and reduce the wait list for services and supports, it is important to have a unified approach to help in difficult fiscal times. Public and private sectors need to work together respecting differences and uniting on common issues. Please consider the following seven principles when designing a plan to combine strengths of the public and private sectors in serving the ID/DD population in many settings with many different levels of need.
I hope you will consider the following seven principles to help meet the public-private needs in CT’s Department of Developmental Services.

1. Funding appropriated by the legislature should not revert to the General Fund when DDS identifies and implements efficiencies and cost savings. Such savings should be used to serve those on the waiting list for residential services.

2. The waiting list for residential services should be revised to ensure that it includes all DDS eligible individuals in need of residential services. Information about their needs should include the timing and type of services that are required to serve each individual.

3. A wide array of residential services should be made available by DDS to meet the very different needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

4. Employment and day services budget must include funding for the projected number of graduates on a full-time basis for the entire year. Individuals and families should not be left waiting for funding as individuals complete their last year of school.

5. Increase funding and availability for respite care in a variety of settings.

6. A fair wage for all direct care staff, both in the private and public sector.

7. The State of Connecticut should maximize the reimbursements it receives from the Federal government. Cuts to DDS funding generally result in the loss of approximately $50. of Federal revenue for each cut of $100. in expenditures.

Thank you for reading my testimony.
Diana Mennone

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