

To: Public Health Committee – CT State Legislature

From: Patricia Greenhalgh

Date: March 6, 2017

RE: DDS Related Bills

I am the parent of a 25 year old young man, John, who had Down syndrome and diabetes. He desperately wants to “live independently” and be part of a larger community, but we struggle daily with how we can make this happen. He will graduate in June from a residential program at Chapel Haven in New Haven, and while we thought the program would put him on the road to living independently, we now realize that with his diabetes he really needs more support. Unfortunately, the choices for a more supportive living environment are very limited and employment options are also difficult to find.

We strongly feel that individuals like John and others with I/DD are the main reason for the safety nets in our government. As a family that works here in CT and pays taxes, we want funding to go these individuals. It is time we took DDS funding and used it to the benefit of a wider number of individuals!

We support the following bills, with the provision that instituting the bill will not require funds to be diverted from current programming/services (other than diverting funds away from institutions, such as Southbury Training School) in order to go into effect:

1. [SB-246](#) AN ACT CONCERNING A STATE-WIDE WAITING LIST FOR RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

We desperately need to know what is available and where we stand regarding residential placement. All our DDS caseworker will tell us is that we were denied funding.... But that doesn't mean we should not be on a list. Very frustrating!

2. [HB-5808](#) AN ACT STREAMLINING FILINGS ACROSS STATE AGENCIES OF FAMILIES RECEIVING SERVICES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

This would alleviate the need to complete repetitive, long paperwork. My son's Down syndrome is not going away... as is the case with probably many DDS clients. It would be most helpful if DDS and DSS could work together to have 1 form that is completed.

3. [SB 244](#) AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVING SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES. To improve services for persons with developmental disabilities and increase public transparency and accountability for the provision of such services.

This bill provides long term planning for families who have a loved one with intellectual disabilities and provides greater transparency regarding the availability of services so that they can better plan for their family member's needs.

4. SB 245 - AN ACT CONCERNING PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

Some version of this bill and/or SB 244 needs to be put in place to 1) develop a strategic plan for addressing the needs of the I/DD population, 2) Provide greater transparency to parents/families as to long term options, and 3) Have a clear plan in place to shift the emphasis/funding from facilities that support a few people, such as Southbury Training School, to supporting a broader population. It is a crime that so much is being spent on STS and new graduates are completely not funded!! We need to invest in these young people so that they can get jobs and live in our communities.

5. SB 39 - AN ACT CONCERNING A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE QUALITY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

We love the idea of greater partnerships with private companies who can offer residential services, jobs and training. We support this bill, assuming that it will not slow down privatization of programs/residential options and that it works to funnel funding away from state run institutions and to the greater I/DD population. (Again, we have an obligation to families and young adults with I/DD to support them as they look for work, recreation and housing! We need to funnel funding to these families and away from institutions such as Southbury Training School, which needs to be run more efficiently as it winds down operations.)