

**Richard D. Rothstein
Public Health Committee Testimony
March 7, 2017**

Support for SB-246

**AN ACT CONCERNING A STATE-WIDE WAITING LIST FOR RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT FOR
PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB-246.

My name is Richard Rothstein of West Hartford, a parent of a 34 year old, with intellectual disabilities, autism and complex medical issues. For 26 years, he has been served by HARC, Inc. in a Community Living Arrangement. I have been an advocate over the past 30 years. I currently am a board member and officer with CT DDS Families First, Vice Chair of the North Region Regional Advisory and Planning Council and a member of the Advocacy Subcommittee of the Council on Developmental Services. My volunteer board service in the field exceeds 20 years.

For years, the DDS has maintained a waiting list for residential services, which has consisted of the number of individuals with various "priority status" classifications. It has been the subject of many discussions. This "waiting list" has not readily had associated with it a variety of important information including, what is it that someone needs and when do they need it. This is particularly important as the term residential services encompasses an ever growing variety of service options.

In the last session, we came before you with SB-294, a bill which included several provisions.

SB-294, as it passed unanimously out of this committee, included provisions to have DDS conduct a survey of all those who had individual plans, in order to determine any current or future residential service needs. The purpose of this survey was to assist in planning for the future of DDS services.

By agreement with DDS, this provision was removed from the bill that left this committee, after it had received 80 bipartisan sponsors, as DDS had started a process of revising various terminology for what we have always referred to as the waiting list. It was felt by DDS that legislation should wait until the waiting list terminology changes were complete before moving forward with this survey. DDS and those of us seeking this annual survey were encouraged to work together to explore the concept and return for legislation in 2017. The balance of SB-294 went on to be passed unanimously in recorded votes in the Senate and House and was signed by Governor Malloy after accumulating 130 sponsors. (Public Law 16-60)

Over the past year, we have worked closely and cooperatively with Acting Commissioner Scheff, Director Pollio-Cooney and senior management of DDS to explore, develop, and create this survey process. It has been done in a fashion that will provide the critical additional information without additional administrative time or expense. The process, and the its implementation as of March 1, 2017, is included in written testimony by DDS

to the Appropriations Committee Health Workgroup on March 2, 2017.

The additional data captured in this new process will be invaluable in helping DDS, Public Health and Appropriations Committees and the legislature plan for the future service needs of DDS families. What is it that each individual waiting for residential services needs and when will they need it. This is information not previously available to the planning process. It also ensures that a detailed discussion about future needs occurs during the individual plan process.

At of today, besides Senators Fasano and Osten who are the original sponsors, 23 additional senators and representatives have co-sponsored this bill on a bipartisan basis. Although this does not provide new funding, the survey has been enthusiastically received by those families to whom it has been explained. It is understood that planning is a key part to the service delivery process.

We are committed to working with DDS, the sponsors, legislative staff and this committee to draft language that includes this critical portion of the planning process in statute including periodic reporting to the Advisory and Planning Councils, Council on Developmental Services, Public Health and Appropriations Committees. It is our understanding that DDS is agreeable to memorializing this process in statute.

Thank you for your attention and assistance in completing this process begun one year ago and assisting in enacting this process into statute.