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**Committee on Children  
Public Hearing on – H.B. 5332  
An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Department of Children and Families  
Tuesday, March 6, 11:00am, Room 1D of the Legislative Office Building  
Submitted by: Stan Soby, Vice President, Public Policy and External Affairs, Oak Hill**

Good morning Senator Moore, Senator Suzio, Representative Urban, Representative Zupkus and distinguished members of the Committee on Children.

My name is Stan Soby and I am the Vice President for Public Policy and External Affairs for Oak Hill. Oak Hill has been providing services for 125 years and is a leader in providing the highest quality community-based programs; through education, assistive technology, programs and advocacy, we support people at every stage of life. Oak Hill, has over 20 distinct programs; 152 program sites, classrooms, and homes located in 77 towns. Oak Hill employs over 1,700 professionals to successfully help meet the changing needs of close to 40,000 people with disabilities each year. What is obvious to me as I visit the various programs and meet our program participants and staff, is that Oak Hill's does fulfill its mission to set the standard in providing education and lifelong learning opportunities to enhance independence and quality of life for people with disabilities.

I am here to testify in support of Section 8 of House Bill 5332, An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Department of Children and Families.

Last year, the General Assembly passed Special Act 17-21, "An Act Establishing a Working Group to Review the Licensure and Certification Process for Certain Nonprofit Community Providers." That statute called for the Office of Policy and Management to convene a working group of multiple state agencies and community providers to participate in a Lean process to streamline and standardize the State's licensure and certification processes. I am honored to be a member of the Licensure and Certification Workgroup that resulted from SA 17-21.

The recommendation before you in **Section 8 of HB5332** are the result of months of collaborative work, using Lean processes, including a 5-day Kaizen, among members of the provider community and representatives from OPM, DCF, DDS, DMHAS, and DPH. All stakeholders involved agreed upon and developed these recommendations to lessen the administrative burden on community providers and make available valuable resources to continue serving people in need.

**I ask that you please support Section 8**, which exempts DDS's Continuous Residential Support (CRS) homes from DCF licensing. The CRS homes are overseen by DDS Quality and Systems Improvement Division. DCF currently licenses three CRS homes that serve youth under age 18. DDS has a review process which is equivalent or higher than the DCF licensing standard.

A significant focus of SA 17-21 and the Workgroup's efforts was on eliminating duplicative and burdensome regulations with which providers have to comply. In this particular case, CRS homes dually overseen by DCF and DDS caused providers to have to comply with similar oversight from two separate state departments. Amending the statute as Section 8 does will ease the burden on providers and will free up valuable administrative time and money to focus more on providing services.

Finally, please support more of this kind of system change in the future. As directed by SA 17-21, community providers have been involved in this process every step of the way, and our state agency partners have been sincere about the need to change. There are now eight subcommittees of the Licensure and Certification Workgroup with over 42 members working on implementing recommendations, with community providers and state agency representatives serving on each one. **Please use this process as a model to improve processes and increase efficiencies in other systems within state government in the future.**

***Our Mission: Oak Hill sets the standard, partnering with people with disabilities, to provide services and solutions promoting independence, education, health and dignity.***