

Public Hearing on DDS Bills

March 7, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Benjamin Davies, I live in Bolton, and I am the Manager of Advocacy & Outreach at MARC Community Resources in Middletown. I am writing to comment on S.B. 296 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO SERVE PEOPLE SEEKING RESIDENTIAL SERVICES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES., S.B. 463 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FACILITIES AND RESOURCES PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY., and S.B. 400 AN ACT CONCERNING GRADUATE FUNDING AND THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.

MARC supports S.B. 296, a bill which establishes a pilot program to encourage providers to offer more supported living options, to allow people who are capable of greater independence the option to choose less restrictive supports, and for providers to use the savings achieved to serve more people.

- This bill gives people with I/DD and families who currently have no hope, a path to finally receive the supports they need before they are in crisis.
- This bill expands current the menu of supported living options to include things such as shared living arrangements, housing clusters, community companion homes, and the use of assistive technology.
- This bill does not eliminate any current options such as Community Living Arrangements (CLA), aka group homes, or Continuous Residential Supports (CRS).

MARC opposes S.B. 463 because it would create a task force to examine re-purposing nursing homes and rehabilitation centers to house people with I/DD.

- This is not a solution to the waiting list crisis and people with I/DD do not belong in nursing homes!
- Since 2005 CT has moved nearly 5,000 seniors and people with disabilities out of nursing homes to age in place with supports in the community. Why do people with me /DD deserve any less?
- Non-profit community based providers have expertise in supporting people with I/DD across their lifespan. Legislators should be investing in strengthening our current system of community supports.
- Nursing homes are for profit entities and the cost of care is exorbitant. Scarce resources should not be used in for profit institutions when community based services are less costly and provide a better quality of life.

MARC supports S.B. 400 because it would guarantee Employment and Day funding for new graduates with I/DD, provide much needed wage increases for employees at community non-profits, and create a training and development committee for workers.

We need to address increasing needs in the community. The programs and services MARC and other community nonprofits provide to the residents of Connecticut are a vital part of our cities and towns, allowing families, seniors and individuals with complex needs to live productive lives in the community, and contributing to making Connecticut a great place to live and raise a family. S.B. 296 and 400 move us forward by providing supports for people on the waiting list, expanding supported living options for people with I/DD, guaranteeing funding for new graduates and taking step towards fair compensation for the industry professionals who support our program participants.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Benjamin Davies
Manager of Advocacy & Outreach @ MARC Community Resources
Ben.davies@marc-cr.org
860-342-0700 x216