

March 14, 2018

Dear Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Jamie Lazaroff and I live in Hampton. I am a person with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. I am also the Self Advocate Coordinator at The Arc Quinebaug Valley and the Secretary of the Council on Development Services. I am testifying today in support for SB 296 An act establishing a pilot program to serve people seeking residential services from the Department of Developmental Services and SB 400 An act concerning graduate funding and the provision of support and services for persons with intellectual disabilities and in opposition to SB 463 An act concerning the development of a facilities and resources plan for persons with Intellectual Disability.

I would like to start with SB 296. People with disability have many difference needs. This bill should look at all options in terms of housing to include 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). It would be up to the individual and his or her family and team to decide what option is best for that person.

In terms of support of SB 400, our kids are our future and need the same opportunities as any other student graduating high school. This bill would also provide much needed wage increases for employees at community non-profits, and create a training and development committee for workers.

In terms of our opposition to SB 463, since 2005 Connecticut 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 you want to reverse this trend? This bill would be the opposite of the two bills we are supporting. While there will be family members on the task force which is good, there will be no self-advocates which is a problem. We have a saying in the self-advocacy world "If you're not at the table you're on the menu."

I would like to quote your colleague Senator Ted Kennedy Jr, in terms of what we are talking about. . "We are advocating for civil rights, equality, self-determination, and dignity for all citizens of this great state. We deserve the right to live independently as possible in our communities and not in an isolated, segregated, apartheid like environment."

Please consider supporting/opposing these bills.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Jamie Lazaroff

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