

***CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance
151 New Park Ave #75
Hartford, CT 06106***

Written Testimony to the Public Health Committee March 16, 2018

S.B. No. 463 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FACILITIES AND RESOURCES PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY. (Opposed)

Senators Gerratana and Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Melissa Marshall. I am the Coordinator of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA), a coalition of over 200 members representing people from all disability groups. The Alliance is opposed to S.B. 463 and has signed a letter delivered to the committee earlier in the week from other leaders in the disability rights movement in Connecticut. These groups include the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities; The Arc of Connecticut; Disability Rights Connecticut, (the State's Protection and Advocacy system); UConn University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; and the State Independent Living Council which delineates the reasons for our opposition in detail.

The bill will establish a task force that will examine "alternative underutilized resources, including, but not limited to, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers." This will inevitably lead to continued and potentially increased segregation, isolation and devaluing of people with intellectual disabilities. Those of you who serve on the I/DD task force and/or who have attended Family Days at the Capitol sponsored by The Arc Connecticut are sorely aware of two things. First, families are languishing on a waiting list where they have been told that they "are waiting for nothing" when many of them could benefit from resources that would be made available by closing Southbury Training School and the Regional Centers. Second, virtually all other states are moving away from institutionalization. As you have been made aware, the detriments of institutionalization, which include civil rights violations, and the benefits of community living have been clear for decades and do not require study.

As we have said on numerous occasions, please support Connecticut in returning to being a leader in promoting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is time for Connecticut to decide to be on the right side of history on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

We are concerned about the creation of yet another task force when there are decades of literature and expert testimony about how to deal with the situation of abuse and neglect throughout the mental health system in Connecticut. Should here be a task force established

we strongly urge you to have significant representation from people with lived experience at Connecticut Valley Hospital and the Whiting Forensic Division.

Thank you for your consideration.

Those of you who are members of the I/DD Caucus and those of you who attended Family Day at the Capitol a few weeks ago, and perhaps over the five years that the Arc Connecticut has sponsored it, are painfully aware of the crisis that has arisen over the last several years where budgets were proposed and passed that did not support graduates in getting day and other services. Even though the situations were resolved for many families eventually, the prospect of not having day services wreaked havoc on all families of graduates. Family members lost jobs. Graduates skills and self-esteem declined leaving them to wonder out loud at past hearings as to why they bothered to attend and graduate high school at all. Please provide graduates with I/DD and their families at least a small semblance of security in these unpredictable times. The CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance hopes that you consider this bill favorably.

Thank you for your consideration.