

My name is Pat Tyler. I am the parent of an adult daughter with intellectual disability and autism. My daughter has successfully been living in the community for the past eight years. I am here to testify in opposition to Raised Bill No. 463 .

I worked as an Abuse Investigator for the State of Connecticut for the 19 years. During the course of my investigations, there were cases I was involved in that included individuals living in nursing homes. I never once visited an individual with intellectual disability residing in a nursing home and left with the observation that this person had a rich and full life. I am not commenting on the efficacy of nursing homes and their ability to meet the needs of individuals who may require intensive medical attention, but I can comment upon the capacity of a nursing home to meet the emotional, intellectual and social needs of an otherwise healthy individual with intellectual disability. Individuals with intellectual disabilities have the same rights and needs as those without intellectual disability to reside within their local communities. Moving individuals into nursing homes does not meet their needs and rights to be considered fully participating members of their local communities. I am saddened to learn that there are families who are supporting this particular bill. I am sure that these families want to ensure the future safety and well-being of their child. We must do better to work with families and provide innovative, cost effective measures that encourage individuals with disabilities access to community living. It's quite frankly a throwback to the dark ages to seriously consider that institutionalized care can do a better job. This has already been attempted and fought in numerous states, and the data is available from renowned experts in the field of intellectual disabilities that community living is best practice. Why are we now once again considering an institutional approach? Clearly this is a monetary issue that looks to be a quick fix for a problem of how to carefully plan for the future housing needs of individuals with intellectual disability. There are numerous examples of successful community living arrangements for even very complex individuals who also have medical needs. For those considering this Bill, I suggest you make a field visit to a nursing home setting and then a field visit to a community based setting. The differences will demonstrate the stark differences in the quality of life. You only have to do research on why experts have in large majorities moved away from institutionalized care to community based care to get clarity on this matter. It is not necessary to repeat history when we have better models to offer individuals that are more cost effective and humane.

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