Good evening Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Walker, Vice Chairs Senator Hartley, Representative DiMassa, and Representative Horn, and Ranking Members Senator Formica and Representative Lavielle. My name is Win Evarts and I’m the Executive Director of the Arc Connecticut and a parent of a 28 year-old son with I/DD.

I am here to comment on HB 7148, specifically the portion of the legislation relevant to individuals with I/DD, and to support the Governor’s proposed budget that would fund caseload growth for Employment and Day Services, continued expansion of the array of residential, behavioral and medical supports, and wages for direct support workers that begin to reflect the valuable work they do. This is a strong initial step in the right direction because over the next two years:

- 938 individuals and their families or guardians will have a clear path to needed supports without stressing, regressing, or losing family income by being home with their unsupported loved ones;
- 262 individuals will transition to community-based residential supports, some with the help of federal money, enabling them to build their lives with choice. An additional 70 individuals will live independently and inclusively in their communities, supported by assistive technology;
- Resources will be developed to support both people with I/DD and those that support them when the most intensive supports are needed so emergency rooms and other expensive institutional settings are less used; and
- Thousands of direct support staff will be paid wages that begin to reflect the important work they do.

However, this legislation does not address every issue, notably halting the policy of converting public sector residential settings to private sector settings and making no policy with respect to high institutional costs or the waiting lists. That being said, we strongly believe this legislation and budget proposal enables individuals with I/DD and their families a clear path to live, work, and
contribute to their communities and our state, and therefore should be supported.