

HONORABLE COMMITTEE MEMBERS: THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT TESTIMONY. AS A PARENT OF A DAUGHTER WHO HAS BEEN EMINENTLY SUCCESSFUL IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT, I WANT TO ENDORSE THE CREATION OF THE TASK FORCE. MY DAUGHTER IS A PERSON WITH INTELLECTUAL

DISABILITIES. THROUGH THE RENOWNED PRIVATE NON-PROFIT HARC OF GREATER HARTFORD, MY DAUGHTER JOINED THE WORK FORCE OVER A DECADE OR MORE AGO. AT THE TIME, SHE WAS LIVING AT HOME. THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING IN DIFFERENT WORK SETTINGS AIDED BY A COACH HAS REMARKABLY

EXPANDED HER SOCIAL ABILITIES, MATURITY AND CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCES. IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT HER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT VENTURES WERE THE PRIMARY INFLUENCE IN BUILDING HER CONFIDENCE TO THE EXTENT THAT SHE WAS ABLE TO MOVE INTO HER OWN APARTMENT WITH TWO PEERS TWO

YEARS PAST. HARC STAFF ARE THE SUPERB CARE PROVIDERS FOR THE THREE YOUNG LADIES WHO DAILY DELIGHT "IN THIS PLACE OF THEIR OWN!" THEY PAY THEIR OWN RENT, UTILITIES, FOOD ETC. THEY RECEIVE STATE FUNDING ONLY FOR THE STAFFING. THEY LOVE THEIR JOBS!!!

AS A PARENT ADVOCATE, I BELIEVE THAT THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PIECE PROVIDED TO THE IDD COMMUNITY BY A VARIETY OF PRIVATE NON-PROFITS COULD BE VASTLY EXPANDED AS APPROPRIATE TO A CLIENT'S ON-GOING PERSONAL GROWTH. THERE ARE MANY MIDDLING TO HIGH NEED MEMBERS OF

CONNECTICUT'S LARGE IDD POPULATION IN NEED OF THIS GENRE OF EMPLOYMENT. IT WOULD BE MY FONDEST HOPE THAT THE NEW TASK FORCE STUDY CAREFULLY THE SUCCESS RATE AND WIDE APPLICABILITY OF "SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT" FOR FOLKS LIKE MY DAUGHTER, SHE IS CAPABLE OF SUFFICIENT

PRODUCTIVITY TO ACCOMPLISH "SOME REAL WORK FOR SOME REAL PAY" IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN! IT HAS BEEN HEARTENING TO WATCH VARIOUS BUSINESSES WELCOME MEMBERS OF THE IDD COMMUNITY TO THEIR WORK PLACE. TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS OF THE IDD COMMUNITY ABLE TO WORK COMPETITIVELY,

THOSE IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ARE INSPIRING EXAMPLES OF HOW THE GENERAL COMMUNITY TRUELY ENHANCES THE DIGNITY AND WELL BEING OF MANY WONDERFUL CONNECTICUT CITIZENS.

BASED UPON MY HANDS-ON PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF YEARS RAISING A DAUGHTER WHO COURAGEOUSLY OVERCAME LIFE-THREATENING MEDICAL SITUATIONS DESPITE HER INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, I WOULD SUGGEST SOME GUIDELINES IN THE APPOINTING THE PROPOSED TASK FORCE. FIRST AND

FOREMOST, THERE MUST BE REPRESENTATION OF FAMILIES WITH THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF RAISING PERSONS WITH IDD FROM ALL LEVELS OF NEED-- HIGHEST TO LOWEST! MORE IMPORTANTLY, THIS IS A 'SINE QUA NON' FOR AN EFFICACIOUS TASK FORCE. FOR INSTANCE, THERE ARE MANY GREAT MILITARY

HISTORIANS WHO HAVE STUDIED WAR. BUT ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED WAR CAN KNOW WHAT CONFLICT MEANS AT ITS MOST FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL. SECONDLY, THE LEGISLATIVE MEMBERSHIP MUST BE STRICTLY BIPARTISAN. THIRDLY, THERE ARE A SELECT GROUP OF NON-PROFIT PROVIDERS WITH

A TRACK RECORD OF INSIGHT AND ACHIEVEMENT REGARDING IDD EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES. THE TASK FORCE MUST HAVE THEIR VISION AND METHODS. LASTLY, AN OFFICIAL OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES SHOULD BE SEATED. IN SUM, THIS CORE OF APPOINTEES WILL CONSTITUTE

A MATRIX UNDOUBTEDLY LINKED TO ANCILLARY ADVOCACIES AND EXPERTISES READILY AVAILABLE FOR GATHERING DATA. ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS ARE KEY TO CHARTING AN EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTUS SUITED TO A HIGHLY INDIVIDUALIZED AND EVER-CHANGING IDD POPULATION-- POISED TO WORK,

ENJOY AND THRIVE FROM THIS PERENNIAL HUMAN RITE OF PASSAGE! THANK YOU ALL,
JOE DUFFY, MA, MS--27 LINCOLN RD., WETHERSFIELD, CT 06109 / CO-FOUNDING PARENT, ARC SPECIAL IDD LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS; REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, DDS NORTH RAQ; APPOINTED STATE COUNCIL ON

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Joe Duffy