REP. WALKER (93RD): You and Heather sort of stay vigilant when muting everybody unless they are talking please cause I don’t know where that.

SUSAN KEANE: We will.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you, ma’am.

SUSAN KEANE: Thank you.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Okay, we can go. Good Morning, everybody. Good Morning. I want to welcome the Appropriations Committee and the Human Service Committee today on Friday, December 18th for Public Hearing Agenda for the Medicaid Waiver Renewal Application for Employment and Day Services, Medicaid Waiver Renewal Application. I will ask my Co-Chair if she has anything she would like to say to people before we start.
SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): No, I just hope everybody is getting ready for the holidays.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you, ma’am. Let’s see, Representative Abercrombie are you on? Senator Moore are you on? Okay. Senator Formica, you are on for Appropriations. Good Morning, sir.

SENATOR OSTEN (19TH): He’s not getting sound right now. He is texting me.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Okay. Representative Lavielle are you on?

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Well, I actually am.


REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Good Morning, it’s nice to see everybody. Well it’s white outside with snow, Merry Christmas and everything else and let’s go.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. Representative Case I see you’re on. Good Morning, sir.

REP. CASE (63RD): Good Morning. Looking forward to getting started here.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I don’t know if there are any other rankings and I can’t see any others so I’m just gonna move right into the agenda itself. Today we are going to be talking about the Employment and Day Support Medicaid Waiver Renewal Application. For everybody’s information there was the, public had an opportunity to submit or ask for requests because this waiver application renewal form was posted ten days before yesterday. The opportunity to sign-up for anything, for any testimonies was closed as of four o’clock yesterday. It was listed
in the bulletin and so everybody had an opportunity to if they would like to make testimony. They still can submit testimony if they would like. Representative Abercrombie, Good Morning. Good Morning.

REP. ABERCROMBIE (83RD):  Good Morning, Madam Chair. Good Morning to everyone.

REP. WALKER (93RD):  Thank you. So at this point I would like to ask, we have 11 people signed up and I think people, I just want to explain why we have 11 people.

REP. GONZALES (3RD):  [Cross talking] He here god.

REP. WALKER (93RD):  Everybody please mute your phones. Thank you. Why we have 11 people signed up is because we have the wonderful agencies of DSS and DDS and their support staff. So in the day of Zooms and technology, we have to list all the people that potentially could speak but I ask them if either Commissioners refer to them, would they still identify themselves if they are going to support you in the conversation so that we can make note of it in the meeting notes. So with that, I am going to go first to the Commissioner of DDS, Commissioner Schell. Good Morning, sir. Welcome.

COMMISSIONER SHEFF:  Good Morning and it’s nice to see so many of you, just being with all of you. Had the opportunity of visiting with others and some of you on our weekly calls that have been very helpful but I am happy to be here before you today. I believe the testimony we have prepared regarding this as DSS is the State Medicaid Agency responsible for the waivers and their submission to the federal government. Deputy Commissioner Brennan will be
presenting our testimony and I have a handful of staff available to answer any questions following that. Would that be the appropriate next step?

REP. WALKER (93RD): Yes, yes it is. I just wanted to allow you to speak first and then have Kathleen, Ms. Brennan follow right behind. So Kathleen Brenna go right ahead from DSS. Thank you, ma’am. Thank you, sir.

KATHLEEN BRENNAN: Thank you. Thank you, so Good Morning Senators Osten, Moore, Formica and Representative Walker Abercrombie, Lavielle and Case and Honorable Members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committee. My name is Kathy Brenna, I am the Deputy Commissioner for the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services and I am very pleased to be here today with Jordon Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services and other members of DSS and DDST teams who will be here to assist answering questions, any questions that you may have. Right screen, move. Excuse me.

Visions of Section 17(b)8 of the Connecticut General Statutes, we are here today to seek your support for the renewal of the DDS Employment and Day Services supports Medicaid waver effective April 1st, 2021. As the Connecticut single state agency for Medicaid, DSS has the administrative authority over this waiver while DDS functions as the operating agency. The DDS Waiver is designed to support individuals with intellectual disability who live with family or in their own homes and require career development, supported employment or community based day supports, respite or behavioral supports so that they may remain in the community. As of September
20th, September 2020, I’m sorry, 1,895 individuals were enrolled in the EDS waiver. As part of the renewal application DSS and DDS are proposing the following changes:

Differentiating transitional employment services from prevocational services in the waiver and modifying their definition to match those that are used in the individual and family support and comprehensive DES waivers. Prior to this renewal, the vocational services were incorrectly listed as an alternative service title to transitional employment services rather than a separate service. This is a technical correction of an error and no waiver participants will be negatively impacted or have their services altered by this change.

We are also seeking to modify and align waiver performance measures to ensure consistency across all Connecticut waivers including those revisions requested by DMS.

Finally technical and administrative clarifications including those requested by CMS. No current enrollees will be negatively impacted by the changes proposed to this application. There are no substantive service changes throughout the application.

Pursuant to 17b-8 of the Connecticut General Statutes a Notice of Intent for the renewal of the employment and day support Medicaid Waiver was posted for public review and comment in the Connecticut Law Journal as well as both of our Departments website beginning October 27, 2020 for a period of 30 days. There were no comments submitted in response to this Notice of Intent. A letter notifying the Committees
of Cognizance of the Departments intent to renew this waiver was transmitted on November 30, 2020.

The Departments respectfully request that the Committees approve the renewal of the Employment Day Supports Medicaid waiver as described. Staff from DSS and DDS are happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you. Thank you Kathleen. Thank you for your testimony. Commission Scheff would you like to say anything behind the testimony from Department of Social Services, Katherine Brennan?

COMMISSIONER SHEFF: Thank you for that opportunity. As the testimony Deputy Commissioner Brennan provided is really accurate. There is not a lot of substantive changes that will impact current service recipients. I did want to just acknowledge that we had some, I had some great assistance at the DDS, at DSS from our staff. Those folks are on the call, Nick Gerard, Cathy Brun, Christos Stahelski [phonetic] not sure if Tammy is on, Katie, Deputy Commissioner Peter Mason, I’m not sure if I missed anybody. But we had a team work on this in a difficult time because we have so many other things going on related to our Appendix K for this pandemic coverage, so to be able to do this, make some substantive changes that are meaningful for CMS which helps when we respond to them in the manner which ensures that we will have a better opportunity to maximize federal reimbursements. So I don’t have any other comments other than to say, that this is a helpful first step as we realign some of the parts of our waivers going forward and we would be happy to answer any of the technical or just typical
questions you may have. And thank you Deputy Commissioner Brennen for providing this testimony.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you both. All right, are there any questions from any of the Members of Appropriations or Human Services Committees at this time? Please raise your hand in the chat box, I think, in the participants box. Representative McCarty.

REP. MCCARTY (38TH): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just have a quick question for the Commissioner. Can you just tell us with this enrollment now at 1,895 how that compares to the previous year and also in part of the waiver, I know there is a part of it that has self-directed services and just wondered if we have a percentage breakout of those, how many individuals actually use the self-directed services? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SCHEFF: Thank you for the question. I don’t have those numbers at my fingertips so I will, and I don’t know that my staff do. We weren’t necessarily prepared for that question, Crystal or others do you have quick answers? If not, we will follow up with the Representative immediately following the Hearing. Oh I forgot to mention Josh Scalora is also part of our team on that and Christos is hoping, someone spoke to him right now and see if he has last year’s participants. So we may have that before this call is over, but I don’t know if I have it yet.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I just, to answer your question, Representative McCarty, I happen to have the numbers in 2020 was 1,867, in 2019 it was 1,352, in 2018 it was 1,206, 2017 - 1,106, 2016 - 1,003.

So I guess were doing everything right because the
numbers are going higher, so I think that’s a great thing. Thank you.

REP. MC CARTY (38TH): Yeah, and thank you, Madam Chair and that’s what I was trying to determine as to whether or not more individuals were availing themselves to the services and then going forward we don’t need that today, I’m curious to see how many individuals are using the self-directed services component. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SCHEFF: We can get that breakdown and Rep. Walker you make a valuable addition to our team thank you.

REP. WALKER (93RD): I’m looking for another job. I’m going to add on to the job [Laughter]. No I asked that question of our fiscal analysis people, so thank you. Are there any other questions from the Committee? Oh, this is wonderful. [Laughs]. My heart be still. Oh, Senator Lesser Did you take it away, Senator Lesser?

SENATOR LESSER (9TH): Yeah, I don’t have a good connection so I won’t ask a question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. WALKER (93RD): Thank you, sir. So with that, I guess I will close this Public Hearing.