June 14, 2017

Re: Support for Increased Revenue Instead of Devastating Cuts Affecting People with Disabilities

Dear Governor Malloy and Members of the General Assembly:

On behalf of the CT Cross-Disability Lifespan Alliance, a coalition of over 200 individuals, advocates and non-profit providers working together to promote equal access and rights for people with disabilities, we are writing to express our grave concerns over the new state budget recommendations for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019.

The various budgets propose to, among other things:

- Eliminate the Community First Choice Program (CFC), which closes the door to in-home supports and services for people with disabilities;
- Eliminate the five (5) CT Centers for Independent Living;
- Eliminate Day & Employment Funding for 2017 & 2018 graduates with IDD;
- Cut $2 million from existing Day & Employment Services;
- Cut $8.5 million from existing Behavioral Services Program Services;
- Close Camp Harkness & Camp Quinebaug;
- Decrease funding for the IDD Partnership;
- Cut educational aid for blind children;
- Cut vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities for people with disabilities seeking to enter the workplace;
- Reduce DMHAS legal services (CLRP) funding to consent decree levels, and eliminate funds provided for representation of DMHAS clients in legal matters concerning their housing;
- Eliminate Regional Mental Health Boards (RMHBs) by consolidating them with Regional Action Councils (RACs), and then cutting the funding;
- Cut Young Adult Services in DMHAS;
- Cut grants for mental health, substance use and employment services;
- Cut School Based Health Centers;
- Cut Home and Community Based Services (HCBS);
- Cut Housing Supports and Services, and Homeless Youth services, which support people in getting a home or staying in their homes, instead of experiencing homelessness;
- Cut the Medicare Savings Programs, which cover unaffordable cost-sharing for low-income elderly and disabled Medicare enrollees;
- Eliminate the SAGA program, which provides subsistence benefits of $55 or $219/month to adults unable to work, many of whom are awaiting a finding of total disability by the Social Security Administration, and allows them to escape or avoid homelessness.

The revised budget proposals include new, deep cuts to services and further erode our state’s human services safety net. The proposed budgets drastically cut Medicaid and disability programs, painting a grim future with far-reaching consequences for people with disabilities.
It is particularly disheartening that these proposals would be considered on the state level in light of President Trump’s proposed federal budget, which would make savage cuts to Medicaid, Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income and the rest of the social safety net which ensures people’s basic needs are met, in order to fund large tax cuts for those who need it the least. Budgets are ultimately moral documents. The Trump administration’s proposals have been rightly condemned here in Connecticut as an affront to American values. We should not replicate its approach of taking from our residents who live in poverty and work on improving their lives, and from people with disabilities, in order to protect the most privileged.

The state budget cannot be balanced with cuts alone. The disability community cannot sustain deeper cuts to an already fragile system. The CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance supports revenue options that build a stronger and healthier Connecticut and preserve our human services foundation.

We, the undersigned members of the CT Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, urge you and all our elected officials to support adequate funding for the long-term needs of our residents as worthwhile investments in the future and not simply as expenditures to be cut in order to satisfy short-term budget shortfalls. We support options that build a stronger and healthier Connecticut and are investments in all of our futures, specifically options for revenue detailed in a brief from Connecticut Voices for Children, available at: http://www.ctvoices.org/sites/default/files/Revenue%20Options%202017%20FINAL%20updated.pdf.

Thank you for adopting this balanced approach in fashioning a budget for the coming two years.

**Organizations**

Judith Stein  
Ex. Director  
Center for Medicare Advocacy

Tom Swan  
Ex. Director  
Connecticut Citizen Action Group

Kathi Liberman  
Ellen Cyr  
Conn. Association of Resident Services Coordinators for Housing (CARSCH)

Win Evarts  
Board Chair  
Disability Rights CT

Daria Smith  
Ex. Director  
CT State Independent Living Council

Kathy Flaherty  
Ex. Director  
CT Legal Rights Project

Kate Mattias  
Ex. Director  
NAMI CT
Sharon Heddle  
Ex. Director  
Disabilities Network of Eastern CT

Eileen Healy  
Ex. Director  
Independence Northwest

Candace Low  
Ex. Director  
Independence Unlimited

Cathy Adamczyk  
Director  
North Star

Steve Karp,  
Executive Director  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW), CT Chapter

George Ducharme  
Ex. Director  
Communitas, Inc.

Keith Mullinar  
Citizens Coalition for Equal Access

Beverly Kidder  
Area Agency on Aging of South Central

Gaye Hyre  
Ex. Director  
ArtBra New Haven

Kristie Barber  
Ex. Director  
Regional Mental Health Board Executive Director, Region II

Marcia DuFore  
Executive Director  
North Central Regional Mental Health Board, Inc.

Brita Darany von Regensburg  
President  
FAP-Friends of Autistic People

Larissa Podermanski  
Ex. Director  
Community Navigators, Inc.

Colleen McGill  
Family Organizer
Our Families Can’t Wait!
New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199NE

Paul Acker and Kristie Barker
Co-Chairs
Keep the Promise Coalition

Michelle M. Duprey
Director
Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities, City of New Haven

Suzi Craig
Senior Director of Advocacy and Development
Mental Health Connecticut, Inc.

Julie Peters
Ex. Director
Brain Injury Alliance of CT

Alexis Smith
Executive Director
New Haven Legal Assistance Association

Marc Anthony Gallucci
President
ADA Coalition of Connecticut

Jamey Bell
Executive Director
Greater Hartford Legal Aid

Deborah Witkin
Interim Executive Director
Conn. Legal Services

Lois Rosenwald
Leslie Simoes
Co-Directors
Autism Services & Resources Connecticut/ASRC

**Individuals**
Donald James
Lisa Abbey-James
Alexia Boukoms
Chris Blake
Molly Cole
Ruth Grobe
Ray Elling
Cecilia Lewis
Elaine Kolb
Kathy Johnson
Margaret Johnson
Ed Preneta
Alice Buttwell
Jayne Kleinman
Pat Beeman
Beverly Jackson
Katherine Pellerin
Robert Nims
Karen Roseman
Karen Armstrong
Melissa Marshall
Daniela Giordano
Tom Behrendt
Mary-Ann Langton
Lydia Mele
Scott Robbins
Michelle Johnson
Peggy Johnson
Brynn Hickey
Dan Pinnell
Precious Putnam
Amy Dudek
LJ Granata
Sharon Denson
Shirley Girouard, Ph.D
Kelly Phenix
Linda H. Rammler, M.Ed., Ph.D., CESP