

December 31, 2015

To: Commissioner Murray, DDS

From: Lawrence and Joan Gray
124 Laurel Ridge
East Hampton, CT 06424

Re: STS Recommendations

We are the parents of a 28 year old daughter with Down syndrome. Our daughter lives at home with us and we maintain her daily living needs. We are in our mid and late sixties and are becoming increasingly concerned about what will happen to our daughter should something happen to both of us. She is on the “shameful” waiting list and we have no hope that should an emergency arise she will have any choice as to what her future will be. We hope that by closing Southbury Training School we would know that funding would be available for more choices before an emergency situation arises.

We respectfully submit the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Governor Malloy Should Use his Executive Authority and Close Southbury Training School Today

The very nature of institutions is antiquated along with being discriminatory and segregated. Connecticut, although progressive in respecting the lives of so many others, is falling behind in the value it places on the lives of individuals with I/DD and intentionally chooses to segregate individuals with I/DD at Southbury Training School and the five DDS regional centers.

Governor Malloy has an incredible opportunity should he choose to embrace it. By using his executive authority to close Southbury Training School he could join 17 other states in the movement to promote the basic civil rights of individuals with I/DD.

Recommendation 2: Do Not Do Another Study

There have already been numerous studies done by neutral, non-partisan groups in Connecticut and across the nation supporting the closure of publicly

operated ICF's. Initiating another study is not only unnecessary but completely irresponsible and an excuse to delay closure.

This is 2015, when despite being morally and legally discredited, despite the documented success of Mansfield class member transitions and the 45 individuals successfully transitioning out of Southbury, Connecticut chooses to operate these costly settings and starve the private system of resources and let thousands of individuals stay on the waiting list until their last caregiver dies.

Recommendation 3: Saving Realized By Closing Southbury Training School Should Stay in the DDS System to Serve More Individuals

DDS has a budget of approximately \$1.1 billion - the second highest per capita budget in the country. Yet despite this there is no money in the DDS budget to provide residential supports unless there is an emergency. Even with this substantial budget the private provider system has been starved of resources for over 20 years. Outdated public policy, unnecessary segregation and expensive publicly operated programs remain the barriers to balancing the DDS system of support.

An equitable system would not permit its individuals with I/DD to languish on a waiting list because of a lack of funding while it continues to spend disproportionate amounts of money to maintain morally and ethically unjust segregated large institutions. The savings realized from the closing of Southbury could be used to support individuals on the waiting list and be given to the agencies in the private sector supporting these individuals that have been underfunded for over 20 years.

Governor Malloy has the executive power to correct this inequity by closing Southbury and the five regional centers. He must use this power now.

Respectfully submitted by Lawrence and Joan Gray (parents)