



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

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Governor

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Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

February 28, 2018

Senators Gerratana and Somers, Representatives Steinberg and Betts and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of our agency's tech bill **S.B. No. 165** **AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO ITS STATUTES.**

S.B. No. 165 makes various technical changes to the DDS statutes that include using "person-first" and respectful language, replacing obsolete terminology and using "plain language." The bill cleans up and standardizes the usage of certain terms throughout DDS statutes. Specifically it (1) changes most references from "parent, guardian or conservator" to "legal representative"; (2) replaces "parent" with "family" in certain sections where not only a parent could be involved; (3) replaces "client", "consumer" and "patient" with "individual" or "person"; (4) uses gender neutral terms; (5) replaces "caretaker" with "caregiver"; and (6) replaces "ward" with "protected person" to reflect Probate Court terminology. Also, the proposed bill would allow a "relative" instead of a "parent" to be appointed to the Camp Harkness Advisory Committee.

Each year DDS staff hears from self-advocates, providers, families and various advocates and stakeholders telling us what we should do to promote the use of appropriate language concerning persons who have disabilities. I would like to thank the members of the Public Health Committee for year after year raising our respectful language bills so that DDS can respond to the requests of our advocates and stakeholders.

Because of some confusion around what was DDS's final draft of this bill, DDS has submitted some JFS language to LCO for the consideration of committee members. This draft JFS language adds a few sections that have technical changes and adds a few revisions to existing sections of the bill. We hope the committee will look favorably on this bill and the proposed JFS language DDS has submitted.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony on **S.B. No. 165** **AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO ITS STATUTES.** I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time. You also may contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with additional questions.