



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Peter Mason  
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**March 15, 2018**

Senators Moore and Markley, Representatives Abercrombie and Case and members of the Human Services Committee. I am Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **H.B. No. 5462 AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSITION SERVICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.**

This bill proposes to require transition services for special education students who are fourteen to twenty-two years of age and to provide a written bill of rights to parents of special education students at an initial planning and placement team meeting.

Effective transition planning is critical to the success of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities moving from high school to adulthood. The earlier that planning begins, the more likely it is that students obtain successful outcomes upon graduation. DDS is pleased with the collaborative work that is currently being done in partnership with the Department of Education, the Department of Rehabilitation Services and other groups to enhance the use of Charting the LifeCourse person-centered planning tools in Connecticut.

The Charting the LifeCourse Framework was created by FAMILIES to help individuals and families of all abilities and ages develop a vision of a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live. Even though it was originally created for people with disabilities, this universal framework may be used by any person or family making a life plan regardless of circumstances. LifeCourse Planning is built upon the core belief that persons with disabilities and their families have the right to live, love, work, play and pursue their life aspirations just as others do in their community.

Use of these universal person-centered tools will assist students and their families to better plan for all transitions that occur across their lifespan. Rather than expanding the age range for transition planning to ages 14 to 22, inclusive, DDS supports the expanded use of the Charting the LifeCourse process across all ages and for individuals with all types of disabilities.

DDS wishes to caution against expanding the transition responsibilities of state agencies without appropriate resources being in place. DDS is already challenged to meet the transition needs of individuals and families under the current age range. When DDS had a number of Transition Advisors and Education Advisors in each region, the transition process started much earlier and was much more involved. One of the ways DDS has

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001  
460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
[www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds) ♦ e-mail: [ddsct.co@ct.gov](mailto:ddsct.co@ct.gov)  
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managed Personal Services reductions is by not assigning case managers to individuals without an annualized service and by beginning transitions much later than we used to. To date, approximately 150 projected FY18 high school graduates have not been assigned a DDS case manager and a significant number of those individuals have not yet completed Medicaid applications. DDS is currently in the process of hiring six Transition Advisors (two per each of the agency's three regions) and are relying on staff from the regional Helplines to alleviate some of this backlog. Without appropriate staff in place to assist individuals and families, it is difficult for them to explore possible day programs because Level of Need (LON) assessments and benefits applications, such as Medicaid applications, may not yet be completed.

As to the proposal regarding the provision of a written Bill of Rights, it is our understanding that the State Department of Education is already doing this and we support that practice continuing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony on [H.B. No. 5462](#) **AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSITION SERVICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**. You may contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with any questions.