

Good Morning Committee members. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before your committee. My name is Timothy Coleman. I am here to testify against the five year DDS plan. I have worked for the Department on Developmental Services for Thirty- three years now. I currently supervise two public homes in the North Region.

One home has approximately thirteen residential staff and six non-ambulatory medically fragile, acutely ill residents. These residents require extensive twenty-four around the clock nursing care. The second home has approximately fourteen residential staff and six behaviorally challenged men. These residents require intensive around the clock supervision.

During my tenure, I have seen Governor's come and Governor's go. With each administration we are faced with budgetary cuts, impossible work loads, unrealistic budgets, running home with less staff which ultimately compromise the quality of care. Supervisors running multiple homes and the list continues.... These budgetary cuts result in creating more overtime, as positions are left vacant. Mandatory overtime has become routine.

Privatizing much of DDS public sector is an unrealistic attempt to save the taxpayers money. More importantly it will harm the individuals we serve. I am exhausted with defending the concept this administration portrays as, the state employees are the highest paid. " Privatization is the answer".

Public employees are trained to assist the most difficult and challenging individuals. Most of these individuals are too medically involved or too costly in a private settings. Nor is the private sector equipped to handle these individuals.

The home I supervised admitted an individual who almost died at the negligence of a private run home. Sadly the staff was unable to recognize signs of distress. This lack of training resulted in this individual aspirating on food, almost dying. This one incident resulted in a six month hospitalization stay and intubation , followed with a gastric tube insertion, then nursing home for rehabilitation before coming to the home I supervise, where she is receiving specialized care. This individual is now thriving and becoming stronger. Is privatization really cheaper to tax payers of Connecticut?

My wife, since retired, also supervised a public group home in the Brooklyn area. The previous administration insisted in closing this home. This closure occurred despite much debate and pleas from parents, advocates, and guardians. Approximately five year later, the home sits vacant, vandalized, and property devalued.

I am always concerned when politicians use our most respected clients with threats of closure, or conversions. I shutter to think of the ramifications of ending public homes and the overall burden this will ensue to the tax payers on an already growing deficit.

I attended each of the Governors first debates years ago, distinctly remembering him say "Privatization is not the answer" His change in position will have devastating results to the economy, tax payers, consumers, parents, and unemployment, not to mention a soaring deficit.

I implore you to reconsider the decision with supporting the DDS five year plan. Hold this administration accountable for a sensible resolution. As the Governor once said, Privatization is not the answer.

Sincerely,

Timothy T. Coleman