



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
February 1, 2023**

Senator Rahman, Representative Kavros DeGraw, Senator Fazio, Representative Zullo and members of the Planning and Development Committee, I am Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on **H.B. No. 6559 AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING REGULATIONS AND COMMUNITY RESIDENCES**.

This legislation in section 1 would eliminate the right of a community member to petition the Commissioner of Developmental Services, with the approval of the municipal legislative body, to revoke the license of a community residence if that residence was seen as not complying with applicable state statute or regulation. The fact that these petitions to revoke a license must be approved by a municipal legislative body has kept the number of these community member initiated petitions that reach the DDS Commissioner relatively low.

DDS takes community complaints about its licensed residences very seriously and has multiple avenues through which it regularly receives such communications. Complaints are typically received through calls, emails or letters to DDS regional staff or to the Commissioner's office. Legislators or municipal authorities also may directly contact the Commissioner's staff, who will investigate the complaint and respond. This is a more direct way to alert the department that there may be problems or concerns at a licensed residence, rather than going through a municipal legislative body to file a petition to revoke a license. DDS prides itself on its responsiveness to community concerns and sees it as part of its mission to successfully support persons with intellectual disability in participating in their communities. These direct routes to communicate concerns regarding licensed facilities will remain intact regardless of the language in section 1 of H.B. No. 6559.

Section 7 of the bill repeals section 8-3f of the general statutes, which contains the provision that DDS and DCF community residences cannot be sited within 1,000 feet of each other. This change would not have a major impact on DDS and its qualified provider network. DDS is moving away from the use of licensed congregate residences and is focusing on integrated supportive housing, in-home services, community companion homes, and the use of assistive technology to truly integrate the individuals DDS supports into the community. The licensed DDS community residences that already exist comply with the provisions of section 8-3f.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding **H.B. No. 6559 AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING REGULATIONS AND COMMUNITY RESIDENCES**. Please contact Kevin Bronson, DDS Director of Communications, Legislation and Regulations at 860-550-3497 with any questions.