

TESTIMONY OF SANDRA ROBERTS
TO HUMAN SERVICE SUBCOMMITTEE OF APPROPRIATIONS
FEBRUARY 19, 2020
RE: CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

My name is Sandra Roberts and I am testifying on behalf of the Centers for Independent Living. I have been involved with the Center for Disability Rights in West Haven, CT both as a staff person for 30 years and as a consumer.

We appreciate that the level of funding will be the same as last year and the funding for deaf services. However the core funding has been eroding through the years and has not been enough to assist us in meeting the needs of consumers in our service area that we are supposed to be covering. This is very concerning. My current role is part-time information and referral advocate. We receive numerous phone calls for assistance with advocacy and independent living skills training. We do our best to meet the needs of consumers that are able to come by CDR especially if they have forms for benefits or housing applications. However when the need is more involved or they are unable to come in it becomes more difficult because we do not have the staff coverage to really go see consumers in the field. Centers for Independent Living can actually save the state money as we assist in filling the gaps in services that other agencies cannot provide and sometimes we prevent people with disabilities from being placed in nursing homes which would have cost the state of Connecticut money.

We really hope that you will consider increasing the core funding and the funding for deaf services for Centers for Independent Living so we can start providing the level of services that we once provided. Our Center used to provide services to New Haven and Middlesex Counties and a few towns in Fairfield County. Now we barely are able to assist consumers in 5 or 6 towns.

We thank you for taking the time to hear our testimony and please consider increasing our core funding.

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