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On Monday, March 1, 2021, 4:13 PM, jfc4nier <jfc4nier@aol.com> wrote:

Testimony To The Appropriations Committee

To Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am Janet Fournier, a Connecticut resident and parent of an individual supported by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to encourage your support of H.B. No. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

My 34 year old son is serviced by MARC, Inc. of Manchester via DDS funding. He enjoys the opportunity to go to work and spend time with his peers. In order for MARC Inc employees to compete in the job market, they need a wage that is competitive with the job market. The State should address in this budget the increased wages for the dedicated staff should the minimum wage be increased. These staff members are dedicated, skilled and trained to interact with individuals with intellectual disabilities. If minimum wage is increased and wages are not equitably increased to compensate their skill level, I fear a mass exodus.

Budgetary concerns should also be addressed with the possibility of minimum wage increase to the client's themselves to incorporate increases to the wages they are paid thru DDS. I am always disappointed that Connecticut is one of the few remaining states that allows clients of DDS to be paid sub-minimum for the jobs they perform. At present, my son is paid less than \$6 per hour for performing a job that a non-disabled person would be paid minimum wage.

Now is the time to anticipate these changes in funding. Be proactive. Not reactive.

I request an equitable increase of funding to DDS to ensure continuity of services and also provide fair and equitable wages to staff who provide valuable services. As the minimum wage goes up, so should the wages of specialized staff who are trained to administer medication, nutrition, and direct care to our loved ones who have developmental disabilities.

Respectively Submitted,

Janet Fournier, Guardian/Mother
Paul Fournier Person served by MARC, Inc.

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