Good afternoon Senator Osten, Senator Formica, and the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Denise King and I am from Lebanon, Ct. My husband and I are the grandparents and guardians of Matthew King, Jr, who has intellectual and developmental disabilities. We raised Matthew and his siblings from the ages of 8, 7 and 3. Matt is now 30 years old and is a happy, healthy young man. Because he was given a residential placement from Horizons, Ct in 2016, he is now living with his 2 roommates and his support staff and is currently working about 15 hours a week at the Coast Guard Academy cleaning classrooms with some co-workers and his job coach. He will hopefully return to his job at UCONN when the dining halls fully open after Covid. Matt is a happy, confidant young man who continues to grow in his independence and abilities. We believe this is a direct result of his life in an independent setting with the give and take and camaraderie of roommates and staff. We have also benefitted from this transition, as we are now able to fully enjoy our retirement without the constant worry of what will happen to Matthew in the very-quickly coming future. We are so happy for him, although to say that the arrangement is perfect would not be truthful. It will always take some type of overseeing to ensure Matt's continued growth and well-being.

Last year we were finally able to get Matthew his full residential funding and that will go a long way toward helping to ensure a brighter future for him.

The Residential Wait List has been and will continue to be an issue for people who need residential placements. Please help other people in the ID Community to reach their potential no matter the level of need that they may have. Please allot funding for placements. This community has lost a huge amount of funding through budget cuts in years past. This is an issue that will not go away. Please help other people thrive and blossom as our grandson has.

Thank you.

Denise King, Lebanon, Ct. CT DDS Families First