



**Testimony in support of H.B. No. 5293, An Act Concerning the Department of Developmental Services' Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions To Developmental Services Statutes.**

Taquonda Woodson, HS, MSOL, Health Equity Fellow & Kally Moquete, LMSW, J.D Candidate  
2024, Senior Manager of Policy  
Public Health Committee  
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Dear Senator Anwar, Representative McCarthy-Vahey, Vice Chairs Senators Kushner, Marx, Ranking Members Senator Somers, Representative Klarides-Ditria and members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank you for accepting this testimony in support of H.B. 5293: An Act Concerning the Developmental Services' Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions To Developmental Services Statutes, on behalf of Health Equity Solutions (HES), a nonprofit organization with a statewide focus on advancing health equity through anti-racist policies and practices. Our vision is for every Connecticut resident to attain optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

Each year HES engages in community conversations with Connecticut residents to inform our policy agenda. Since 2020, we have engaged over 570 participants across 47 towns and cities. The ability to afford and access quality health care has consistently been among the top three health equity priorities for Connecticut residents and was noted by participants to be a significant barrier to their families' ability to seek health care. Furthermore, during our community conversations this year, we heard from many participants that they want a more integrated health care system that encompasses better access to dental care and improved access for people with disabilities.

Commonly reported challenges individuals with disabilities face include accessibility, physically ergonomically correct furniture, and the absence of assistive technology within dental care.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, caregivers of individuals with disabilities often lack the proper training, education, and support needed to provide safe adequate care or advocate for necessary services on their clients' behalf.<sup>2</sup> H.B. 5293 would support many of those families, by providing critical resources such as training, self-advocates and information to help attain critical care and treatment. In November of 2023, the Office of the Child Advocate conducted a systemic review into the care received by individuals housed in state-licensed facilities.<sup>3</sup> OCA's investigative report identified

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<sup>1</sup> Ballard Center Brief. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ballardbrief.byu.edu>

<sup>2</sup> Connecticut Did Not Comply With Federal and State Requirements for Critical Incidents Involving Developmentally Disabled Medicaid Beneficiaries. <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region1/11400002.asp>.

<sup>3</sup> Connecticut Office of the Child Advocate. (2023, November). Critical Incident Review: Department of Developmental Services, Department of Children and Families, State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OCA/OCA-Recent-Publications/OCACRITICALINCIDENTREPORTDDSDCFDSSOCPD112023.pdf>



deficiencies in safety net and services for disabled individuals in DDS licensed Community Living Arrangements. DDS must implement practices that educate the patient and caregiver on the necessary steps to treat their condition. Providing additional training for the professionals providing direct care will aid in them giving the best possible care to the community they serve.

The recommendations encompassed within H.B. 5293, such as the establishment of an Oral Health and Dental Services Unit within DDS would ensure that residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their caregivers are afforded the proper resources such as support, training, treatment, and accommodations necessary for individuals with disabilities to achieve optimal health outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

Connecticut takes pride in finding ways to advance the health and well-being of its residents. The passage of H.B. 5293 would allow our state to keep moving in the right direction. Moreover, H.B. 5293 would help ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive the quality of care and services that they so desperately need and deserve.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony in support of H.B. 5293, An Act Concerning the Developmental Services' Recommendations Regarding Various Revisions To Developmental Services Statutes. I respectfully urge the committee to consider passing H.B. 5293 If you have any questions regarding my testimony, I can be reached at [kmoquete@hesct.org](mailto:kmoquete@hesct.org) or by calling 860.241.5425

Respectfully Submitted,

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<sup>4</sup> Connecticut Did Not Comply With Federal and State Requirements for Critical Incidents Involving Developmentally Disabled Medicaid Beneficiaries. <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region1/11400002.asp>.