Legislative History for Connecticut Act

Act Number:	07-73	
Bill Number:	7007	
Senate Pages:	2409, 2500-2502	**4**
House Pages:	1695-1700	**6**
Committee:	Public Health: 3179, 3182, 3231-3232, 3262-3264, 3346-3347, 3348, 3351-3362, 3627, 3628-3629, 3647, 3648, 3699-3700, 3701-3704, 3708-3713	**39**

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Hearing and seeing no objection, so ordered.

SEN. LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Calendar 457, marked Passed Temporarily.

Calendar 471 on Page 28, Calendar 471, Senate Bill 1447, would move to refer this item to the Appropriations Committee.

THE CHAIR:

Hearing and seeing no objection, so ordered.

SEN. LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Calendar 484, PR.

Calendar 485, House Bill 7007, Mr. President, would move to place this item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Hearing and seeing no objection, so ordered.

SEN. LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Calendar 501, Passed Temporarily.

Calendar 508, Passed Temporarily.

Calendar Page 28, Calendar 485, House Bill 7007.

Calendar Page 29, Calendar 246, Substitute for Senate Bill 389. Mr. President, that completes those items previously placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Please call the roll.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

The Senate is now voting by roll call on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Members voted? If all Members have voted, the machine will be closed. The Clerk will call the tally. Senator Looney.

SEN. LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President, for a point of order for clarification.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, Sir.

SEN. LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President, thank you. There was an item on the Calendar, Calendar Page 7, Calendar 509, Senate Bill 1106, it may have been announced as part of the Consent Calendar, but in fact, that was an item that, when we took it up, it was amended and then referred to the Committee on Government Administration and Elections, just wanted to clarify that for the record. So it should not be included in the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

It will be noted, Sir. Thank you.

SEN. LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Consent Calendar No. 1.

Total number voting, 35; those necessary for adoption, 18. Those voting "yea", 35; those voting "nay", 0. Those absent and not voting, 1.

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar No. 1 is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calendar Page 15, Calendar 595, Files 263, 678, and 823, Substitute for House Bill 7300, An Act Establishing Measures to Mitigate Catastrophic Losses Due to Hurricanes and Severe Storms, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", Favorable Report of the Committees on Insurance and Finance, Revenue and Bonding.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Crisco.

SEN. CRISCO:

Excuse me, Mr. President, just want to yield.

THE CHAIR:

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Those absent and not voting 4

SPEAKER AMANN:

The Bill passes. Would the Clerk please call Calendar Number 311.

CLERK:

On Page 21, Calendar Number 311, House Bill Number 7007, AN ACT RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION, Favorable Report of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Sayers.

REP. SAYERS: (60th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

SPEAKER AMANN:

The question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill. Representative Sayers, you have the floor, Madam.

REP. SAYERS: (60th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill renames the Department of Mental Retardation as the Department of Developmental Services. It specifies that the name change does not change the criteria for determining eligibility for the Department's services.

To be eligible for services, a person must one, function at a significantly sub-average general intellectual level, and usually this means an IQ score of 69 or lower, and two, at the same time, exhibit deficits in adoptive behavior. These characters must manifest themselves between the person's birth and age 18.

The Bill authorizes the Department of Developmental Services Commissioner to determine how and when related administrative changes, such as revisions to business cards, stationery and signage occur. It also makes a number of technical conforming changes. I move adoption.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? Representative Hetherington.

REP. HETHERINGTON: (125th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill is, in my judgment, well overdue. I believe that as we move, generally, toward more respectful language, it will call for more respectful language in our official capacity.

This is a Bill we, this is a measure we should take to rename this Department, and I definitely support adoption of this measure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Thank you, Sir. Do you care to remark further? Representative Carson.

REP. CARSON: (108th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this Bill, and just want to give one little quote from DMR's testimony this year.

DMR said, as an agency whose mission is to promote respect and dignity for people with mental retardation, it is imperative that those who are

supported by us feel respected, starting with the name of the agency that provides the support to them.

Mr. Speaker, there's been increasing interest from advocates, families and consumers nationally and specifically in the State of Connecticut to the term mental retardation because it is sometimes thought to be stigmatizing and offensive to people.

Last year, we as a body, asked DMR to conduct this study for a name change. This Bill has had the input from clients and families receiving services, and the advocates of persons with mental retardation and other interested parties.

I fully support and congratulate all those who came to bring this product to us today and make it a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Thank you, Madam. Representative Schofield.

REP. SCHOFIELD: (16th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will support this Bill, but I want to register a concern, which is that

this Bill changes the name only in the Department of Mental Retardation and not the mission.

So it will become the Department of Developmental Disabilities but not really serve people with developmental disabilities other than mental retardation, and that means that some people with development disabilities will continue to fall through the cracks. I hope at some point we'll also change the mission.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Do you care to remark further? Would you care to remark further on the Bill before us?

If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members please take your seats and the machine will be opened.

CLERK:

The House of Representative is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? If all the Members have voted, please check the board to make sure your vote has been properly cast.

If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill Number 7007.

Total Number Voting	148
Necessary for passage	75
Those voting Yea	148
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	3

SPEAKER AMANN:

The Bill passes. Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 262.

CLERK:

On Page 6, Calendar Number 262, House Bill Number 7017, AN ACT CONCERNING DEMOCRACY EDUCATION IN

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COMM. ROBERT GALVIN: You're welcome.

SEN. HANDLEY: Are there other questions? Thank you very much, Doctor.

COMM. ROBERT GALVIN: Thank you, Senator.

SEN. HANDLEY: Our next speaker is Gretchen Knauff. Good morning.

GRETCHEN KNAUFF: Good morning. Good morning, Senator Handley, Representative Sayers has disappeared, and Members of the Committee. My name is Gretchen Knauff. I am the Assistant Director at the Office of Protection and Advocacy for persons with disabilities.

Jim McGaughey, our Executive Director, could not be here due to meetings with our federal partners. However, I have submitted copies of his written testimony to you.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on Raised Senate Bill 1194, AN ACT CONCERNING NOTIFICATION TO THE OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INMATE SUICIDES AND DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES CLIENT DEATHS, and Raised House Bill 7007, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION. Our office supports both of these bills.

Raised Senate Bill 1194 was requested by the Office of Protection and Advocacy and we want to thank the Committee for raising it here today.

establishes reasonable minimum timelines for release of records and internal investigations. We urge you to support this bill.

We also want to comment on Raised House Bill 7007. This bill proposes to change the name of the Department of Mental Retardation to the Department of Developmental Services.

The term mental retardation once thought to be progressive terminology has become, in many instances, an insult or a putdown. There are many people in this room who will come after me and tell you their stories about that.

Resulting from the process of listening to the outcries of individuals who are served by the department and the department's thoughtful analysis of information that it has received during the year, they have changed the name or are proposing to change the name to the Department of Developmental Services.

We believe that this new name applies to the present services that are provided and would allow the department. It would fit if the department were to have future expansion or clarification of its services.

Thank you again. I urge the Committee to support both bills, and would be happy to answer any questions. And also, Jim has indicated that if you have questions for him that he would be happy to speak with you about those.

federally qualified health centers, as well as academic medical centers.

It's a cost efficient way of providing care and, in particular, we think is a model of training that makes residents more informed and more sensitive to needs of communities. I would like to stop and see if there are any questions then.

SEN. HANDLEY: Thank you, Doctor. Are there other questions from the Committee? Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Commissioner O'Meara, to be followed by Richard Brody. Good morning, Commissioner.

COMM. PETER O'MEARA: Good morning, Senator Handley, Representat ve Sayers, Members of the Publ c Health Committee.

SB7008
SB1220
SB683

I'm Peter O'Meara, the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Retardation, and I'm before you today to speak in support of Raised House Bill 7007, AN ACT RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION.

I just want to speak in support of the name change. As you know, last year we conducted an extensive process across the state involving members of our community for input, and the result of that was a recommendation to the Governor, to the Public Health Committee, and to the Office of Policy and Management to rename the department to the Department of Developmental Services.

Obviously the generation behind that name change is the focus of the work of our self-advocates who today are here, and I'm sure will eloquently and forcefully present to you the rationale behind the name change.

Obviously we want it to be one that is current and respectful. The only recommendation that we have in addition to the name change is that we maintain our eligibility standard, as we move forward in the future.

The other bills that I'd like to bring before your attention is Raised House Bill 7008, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION. And it really is a number of recommendations around sections of legislation that has to do with reporting.

And we're just asking that many of those reports are actually redundant or the information occurs in other reports that are submitted to the Legislature or to the Office of Fiscal Analysis or to OPM.

And we're just asking that many of those could be consolidated. Some of them actually the committees or the commissions no longer exist, and they actually fulfilled their legal requirements for reporting.

Under that bill, I just want to highlight Section 6, which has to do with guardianship. Currently departmental employees may serve as guardians, but they cannot serve as guardians in their own region or program area. We're

SEN. HANDLEY: Thank you very much, Dr. Shaw, and thank you for the work. I know Generations has been, I think I say it every time, but I'm always impressed with the work. Are there questions for Dr. Shaw? Okay. Thank you very much. Representative Ruwet, good morning.

REP. RUWET: Good morning. Thank you, Senator Handley, for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Raised House Bill 7007, the renaming of the Department of Mental Retardation.

I've been in the field for over 30 years, but I don't think I can articulate the message better than Chelsea will today, so with your permission, I'd like to have Chelsea read her testimony.

SEN. HANDLEY: Chelsea identify herself.

REP. RUWET: This is her first time. I told her that you guys are very nice.

SEN. HANDLEY: It's okay, Chelsea. Just take a big breath and you'll be fine. No one is going to hurry you.

CHELSEA LODGE: Good morning. My name is Chelsea Lodge. I'd like to say I was born with disabilities, and I am a client of the DMR. I can do many things that other people do.

And I do the best I can. And I think they should change the name of the DMR because being called mentally retarded makes me feel I am not as good as other people.

I work, and I do my job well. I was trained to do my work by people without disabilities. I do not want to be believed as mentally retarded because it sounds like I am a lower class person.

I get upset about this when people hear that someone is retarded. They think they are [inaudible] or thinking I am a person with disabilities, and I am as good as anyone else. And I am good at what I do. I don't think I am retarded.

SEN. HANDLEY: Thank you very much for your statement, and you did beautifully.

CHELSEA LODGE: Thank you very much.

SEN. HANDLEY: You did just beautifully, and you proved that you are a very special person, so we thank you. Do you want to say anything?

CHELSEA LODGE: Are there any questions?

SEN. HANDLEY: I want to thank you for coming to testify. You know, there's a lot of people, it takes a lot of courage to come and testify before the Committee, and there's a lot of people that wouldn't do that, so thank you very much for coming and speaking before us.

CHELSEA LODGE: Thank you.

SEN. HANDLEY: Any other comments? Representative Ruwet.

REP. RUWET: I just want to add, there were a few others from her group, it's a group called Yes I Can. It's a self-advocacy group.

And they were not able to come because they are working and want to earn and be a valued member of the committee. So we are really grateful Chelsea took the time out today to come and testify.

SEN. HANDLEY: Yes. Thank you.

REP. RUWET: I appreciate the Committee--

SEN. HANDLEY: --Senator Stillman has--

SEN. STILLMAN: --thank you. One quick one, Chelsea, over here. Nice to meet you. You did a wonderful job. Thank you very much for sharing your personal story with us. It's very important. But I would like to ask where you work, what kind of work you do.

CHELSEA LODGE: I'm sorry. What was that?

SEN. STILLMAN: Where do you work?

CHELSEA LODGE: I do housecleaning, Meals on Wheels, and we go out [inaudible].

SEN. STILLMAN: Very good. Well, thank you for doing that.

CHELSEA LODGE: Thank you.

SEN. STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative Ruwet.

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reassurance. The mother in the middle of the night.

I worked last night. I had a child had a temperature of 104.9. It turned out this child really was find, had nothing wrong. But they felt that was an emergency.

If I cannot come up with a diagnosis of urinary tract infection or pneumonia, did that patient not need to come there?

And that is the philosophy behind prudent lay person. At the time that you present, that you feel it is an emergency and we are there to take care of you. Regardless of your ability to pay, your insurance status or anything else.

And there is a lot of factors we talked about that fit into this. But the basic concept is the emergency department is society's safety net. And we just want to provide quality care, safe care and timely care. And the practice of boarding inhibits that.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you. Any other questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony.

DR. GREG SHANGOLD: Thank you very much.

REP. SAYERS: We will now move on to Senate Bill 1220. And the first speaker is Lynn Warner. Followed by Alyssa Goduti.

LYNN WARNER: Good afternoon, Representative Sayers, Members of the Committee. I am Lynn Warner, the Executive Director of the Ark of

HB 7007
SB 683

Connecticut, a 54-year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities in their families.

We have 23 local chapters throughout the state that provide support, services and advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities. I am here today to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 1220, AN ACT CONCERNING THE BIRTH TO THREE PROGRAM.

We are pleased that the Governor's budget and Raised Senate Bill 1220 have proposed to restore and expand the valuable Birth to Three Program for babies and toddlers with disabilities in their families.

This would restore eligibility to very low birth weight newborns and for children with significant delays in speech and biological risk factors.

It would also expand eligibility for children with mild or unilateral hearing loss. But if adequate funding is not appropriated to the private non [Gap in testimony. Changing from Tape 3A to Tape 3B.]

--age. Let alone attract new ones. If there is recognition of the value of early intervention, and the valuable services that are provided by these agencies.

Must also be recognized. And their efforts must be supported with consistent and adequate long term fundings.

Also, House Bill 7007, AN ACT RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION. A name change for DMR has been discussed and pushed for many years.

The terms retardation and retarded have become extremely negative over the years and are not referred to as simply the R words. These words are now used as everyday slang, often replacing old words, like idiot or moron, which were also once the official words used to describe people with intellectual disabilities.

It is long past time to make a change and we are very pleased that with your support will be renamed the Department of Developmental Services. It is about time.

Finally, Senate Bill 683, AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING. Committee Senate Bill 683 establishes a system to track special education services for children with high levels of lead.

Then analyze the data obtained to assess the children's growth as well as the effectiveness of early intervention services for these students.

Studies conducted for more than 25 years report conclusively that lead poisoning causes developmental delays. It makes good sense to determine if services are designed to minimize the negative effects of lead poisoning are effective and if not, why not.

Expanding eligibility is an investment in the future and creates significant long term cost savings to the state.

Although we appreciate the efforts to address the needs of infants and children, in Birth to Three services, this session, we urge you to also look at the critical needs of all of the individuals with intellectual and other disabilities in our state that are served by community provider organizations.

Connecticut's community providers serve nearly 500,000 individuals with disabilities and other significant needs every year. Community providers have been forced to deal with decades of chronic underfunding.

Funding that has not even come close to keeping pace with inflation. That safety net of human service providers has been stretched to its limit and is in need of immediate relief.

We ask that you adequately fund community providers and that you help develop a long term solution to this funding crisis so that providers can continue to serve people through meaningful programs like the Birth to Three program.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. We no move on to House Bill 7007 and the first speaker is Angela Spino followed by Anne Eason.

ANGELA SPINO: Good afternoon, Representative Sayers and Members of the Public Health Committee. My

name is Angela Spino and I am a disability policy specialist for the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities as well as the parent of a child who receives services from what is currently known as the Department of Mental Retardation.

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities encourages your support for House Bill 7007, AN ACT CONCERNING RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION AS THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and I as a parent, believe the time is long overdue for Connecticut to join most of the rest of the states. And remove the term mental retardation from state statutes.

The word retardation is offensive to many people in Connecticut. And we, as a state, have no business using a word that is hurtful to our fellow citizens. Let alone using it in an official capacity.

At the same time, our position on this issue is one of frustration. A name change will not change the department's mission.

Our frustration is that so much time and energy has been spent. Simply on changing a name. When so many Connecticut citizens with developmental and other disabilities who do not fit the criteria to receive services from the department, go without services and support.

Today, the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities asks you to do what we must do. That is, change the Department's name to the Department of Developmental Services.

This change eliminates the term, mental retardation. And puts the emphasis on services rather than the disability label.

Equally as important, this name change also simultaneously reflects the current service mission of the department and enables future expansion of services and supports based on behavioral and developmental criteria rather than disability label.

This last point is very important. Because tomorrow we will ask you to change the department's mission.

For we will not live up to our obligation as a society until every Connecticut citizen with developmental disabilities has the opportunity to receive services and support. Thank you.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you. And I guess that last part of your testimony brings up a big question. In the past, many people that received services from the Department of Mental Retardation were very reluctant to have a name change.

Because they felt that if it changed their mission that it would lose services. Could you comment on that?

ANGELA SPINO: First it is very important to remove the word retardation from the actual state

agency that serves the people with intellectual disabilities. But, that is the first step.

The second step is to actually open it up so other individuals with disabilities in the State of Connecticut who do not have an IQ of 70 or below, can also receive services.

There are so many other disabilities out there that are not receiving anything. Because there is no state agency that serves them.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you.

ANGELA SPINO: Thank you.

REP. SAYERS: Any questions from Members of the Committee? Okay. Thank you.

ANGELA SPINO: Thank you.

REP. SAYERS: Next speaker is Anne Eason to be followed by Varian Salters.

ANNE EASON: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and the Public Health Committee. And I am especially pleased to see Representative Hetherington from my own hometown of New Canaan. HB 7007

My name is Anne Eason. And I am a special education attorney with an office located on 10 Wall Street in Norwalk. Most of my clients are students with intellectual disabilities.

I also co-authored a book, *IEP and Inclusion Tips*, which focuses on students with intellectual disabilities.

And most important, I am mother to Eva, a delightful 17-year-old student fully included at New Canaan High School who happens to have Down syndrome.

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will always hurt me. Today I made the decision to take a day off from work and drive 90 minutes because I wanted to share how very important it is for DMR to change its antiquated name.

The world has changed. And certain names that used to be okay are now unacceptable. Words matter. When someone calls someone else a retard. When someone calls my daughter a retard, it hurts.

I personally cringe, as do each of my four children. The name the Department of Mental Retardation needs to be changed. I support the change to the Department of Developmental Services.

Now after changing the name, I hope that eventually DMR will broaden its scope of services beyond just individuals with intellectual disabilities.

There are no services for adults with other significant disabilities. Such as autism. And it is unfair to serve only a selected part of the population with significant disabilities.

I do realize that expanding the population for whom DMR serves will mean less money for my

child. But there is no justification to support some and not the others.

I should add that one of the reasons that DMR is so financially stretched is because it shamefully continues to keep Southbury Training School open. Connecticut's last remaining institution.

And then, after spending on them, it throws us the remaining crumbs, for those of us that live in the community.

I would urge you to close down Southbury, the monstrosity. Because locking away human beings with intellectual disabilities is an outmoded way of providing services.

And then use that huge savings, that money to fund the individuals with all developmental disabilities in the community under the umbrella of the department of developmental services.

And I appreciate you allowing me to speak. And I have included my contact information. I can answer questions now or any time in the future.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you. Any questions from Members of the Committee? Thank you very much for your testimony. The next speaker is Varian Salters followed by William Berry.

VARIAN SALTERS: Good afternoon. Hi, my name is Varian Salters. I am from Willimantic, Connecticut. I am a member from People First of Connecticut. HB7007

I have a developmental disability. And I am also a self-advocate coordinator for DMR and help advocate for people with developmental disabilities.

Please pass House Bill 7007 to rename DMR to the Department of Developmental Services. I do not like the R word. When I was in school, people used to call me the R word all the time. It made me feel bad. I like the new name, developmental services, because it does not put me down.

So please pass House Bill 7007. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to listen to this important topic.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you very much. Representative Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much for coming and testifying in front of us today. Just a point of clarification. I see in your testimony that you are President of the Guardian Angels Group?

VARIAN SALTER: I do not think that is my testimony.

REP. TERCYAK: No. That is the next speaker? Okay. Thank you, my confusion. That would explain why you did not say it out loud. Thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony here today. It means a lot to us. Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry for my confusion.

REP. SAYERS: That is all right. Thank you, Representative. Thank you. Are there any other questions from Members of the Committee? Okay. Then thank you for coming to testify today.

The next speaker is William Berry and I believe Chelsea Lodge has already testified and I think she may have left. So the speaker, if she is still here, then she is welcome. If not, it is Quentin Hughes.

WILLIAM BERRY: Good afternoon, Members of the Committee. For the record, I am President of the Guardian Angels. Ha, ha, ha. HB7007

Hello. My name is Bill Berry. I am President of the Guardian Angels group, one of the Milltown chapters of People First of Connecticut.

Once again, I appear today to talk about the R word in DMR. I want the word retarded removed. I want it changed to the Department of Developmental Services. I do not know anyone who fits that R phrase.

To me, the R word is very offensive. It is the same as swearing. People should have their mouth washed out with soap when they say this word as well.

The word is not used at all in my house. I do not even think it should be printed in the dictionary. When I was in school, kids called me retarded at least once every day.

I would go home from school and cry. Kids can be real cruel when it comes to the R word. Sometimes even some adults as well. The R word can also hurt a person mentally. It can really scare you.

For example, for years I would not even go grocery shopping or go into a restaurant. I would always be afraid people were staring at me. Today, however, things have changed for me.

I try not to let things bother me any more. I have more friends today than I did growing up. I am even thinking about living independently.

People have to understand that anyone who uses the R word is ignorant and does not know better. That is why we are here again today. So you will understand and you will know better.

I really hope this issue gets resolved soon. I am really getting fed up with the R word. Hopefully after all the testimony given today you will hear us, and help us get rid of that nasty R word forever. Thank you for listening to me today.

And if anybody is aware, you have seen some of these buttons on some people today? That is to also say that we want the R word taken out. Anybody else has any questions?

REP. SAYERS: Representative Tercyak.

REP. TERCYAK: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you very much. I am sorry for the confusion earlier, but you are the real Bill Berry, right?

WILLIAM BERRY: Yeah. That is okay. I do not want anybody else stealing my job.

REP. TERCYAK: I feel exactly the same, Mr. Berry. You are President of the Guardian Angels?

WILLIAM BERRY: Yes, Sir.

REP. TERCYAK: Now that is not the vigilante group operating out of New York City, is it? You do not wear the red berets and keep the streets safe?

WILLIAM BERRY: No. But I do do that.

REP. TERCYAK: Good for you. But that is part of a different group.

WILLIAM BERRY: It is part of the whole chapter of People First.

REP. TERCYAK: And People First, I have been to some of their meetings in New Britain. That is a statewide organization, correct?

WILLIAM BERRY: Yes. I go to those too. As a matter of fact, there is one next Thursday. That one is going to be in Hartford.

REP. TERCYAK: Thank you very much. I do not know if you remember Steve Saucier from--

WILLIAM BERRY: Yes. He was on our board.

REP. TERCYAK: This was a very important issue to him. And it is important to all of us from New Britain as we remember him too. Thank you very much for coming and testifying for us today.

WILLIAM BERRY: Yes. And I do miss Steve quite a bit.

REP. TERCYAK: Thank you. Me too.

WILLIAM BERRY: Thank you for listening to me. I see I made the bell.

REP. SAYERS: Yes. And thank you. Thank you for testifying about your successful life because it is a success story. So thank you very much.

WILLIAM BERRY: Thank you very much. Thank you, I appreciate it.

REP. SAYERS: Excuse me, Mr. Berry, if you would come back. Representative Hetherington has a question.

REP. HETHERINGTON: I just want to quickly say I saw you in GAE the other day, also in Government Administration and Elections. And you did a great job there too. So you really help us by coming to talk with us and thank you.

WILLIAM BERRY: Well, thank you. Thank you again. Thank you.

REP. HETHERINGTON: Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you. The next speaker is I believe Quentin Hughes? Chelsea is gone right? I just want to be sure. Okay, Quentin.

QUENTIN HUGHES: Hello, I'm Quentin Hughes, III from Danbury, Connecticut. I am the Secretary of People First of Connecticut and Vice President of We Care of Danbury.

I would like to say that I think the Department of Mental Retardation should be renamed Department of Developmental Services.

Because I think the R word, which is retardation, tends to be used as a label suggesting that a person with disabilities has no hope of accomplishing much in life. It is a word that is demeaning and hurtful.

The new title, Department of Developmental Services, will help to eliminate the R word, and therefore would encourage people with disabilities to enjoy life, do the things that they can and like to do and contribute to society.

It would encourage them to realize their dreams and potentials. Please pass House of Representatives House Bill 7007. Thanks for letting me testify.

REP. SAYERS: Thank you very much. Any questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

QUENTIN HUGHES: You are welcome.

JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS

PUBLIC HEALTH

PART12
3611-3923

2007

STA E OF ONNECTI U

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
'0B WES^N S^EET, HA^ ^ORD, C1 ^6'^^-1^^1

Testimony of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Before the Public Health Committee

HB7007

Submitted by: James D. McGaughey
Executive Director
March 14, 2007

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on two of the bills on your agenda today. I apologize for not being available to testify personally, but a long-standing obligation requires me to be in Washington, D.C. at a meeting with our agency's federal partners. Gretchen Knauff, Assistant Director, will present testimony in my stead. She and other members of our staff will also be present at the hearing to respond to questions.

The first bill I want to address is **Raised Bill No. 1194, AN ACT CONCERNING NOTIFICATION OF THE OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INMATE SUICIDES AND DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES CLIENT DEATHS.** This bill was requested by our Office, and I want to thank the Committee for raising it.

This measure would require that our Office be notified about deaths of people with psychiatric disabilities that occur in State facilities so that we can monitor or initiate investigations as envisioned in our federal authorizing legislation. Specifically, Section 1 would require the Commissioner of Correction to notify our Office of inmate suicides and apparent suicides, and to provide, in a timely manner, the medical and mental health records of inmates who commit suicide, along with any related video recordings. It would also require DOC to furnish a copy of any internal investigation reports within five business days of completion of those reports. Section 2 would require the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services to notify our agency of the deaths of any DMHAS clients who are inpatients in a state hospital, or a state-funded hospital bed in one of the private psychiatric hospitals.

The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities was established to safeguard the civil rights of people with disabilities. Many of these people are vulnerable to abuse and neglect, either because of the nature of their disabilities or because of the particular circumstances under which they are living or receiving services. In fulfillment

of our various federal and State legislative mandates, we approach our safeguarding role by conducting investigations and by pursuing various advocacy activities. However, to effectively fulfill the role of independent watchdog, we need to be consistently made aware of events that might raise questions about neglectful treatment or system barriers in the delivery of mental health services.

For instance, OPA's federally mandated Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program has authority to independently investigate suspected neglect or abuse of people with mental illness housed in facilities, including hospitals and correctional facilities. Over the past ten years we have conducted investigations into a number of deaths of people with psychiatric disabilities, including DMHAS patients and several inmates who committed suicide. While not every inmate who commits suicide is ultimately shown to have had a record of treatment for mental illness, the fact of committing suicide is considered sufficient "probable cause" under the PAIMI Act to initially presume that the inmate was mentally ill, and to initiate an investigation. (Please see, OPA v. Armstrong). However, because there is no current requirement that DOC provide our office with notice when an inmate commits suicide, we cannot be sure that we are initiating all of the inquiries that we should be. If we read about it in the newspapers or otherwise hear about it, we can initiate an inquiry; if we do not hear about it, we cannot do so. Similarly, if we receive information about an allegedly untimely death of a patient in a psychiatric hospital, we can initiate an inquiry. But, there is no systematic way of ensuring that information about the circumstances of patient deaths is being independently reviewed and that investigations are pursued into those cases that raise questions.

This bill would address this problem, at least with respect to people who are hospitalized or incarcerated. In addition, because we have experienced considerable delays in obtaining certain records related to DOC inmate suicides, the bill would also establish some minimum requirements for timely release of records and internal investigation reports. Again, I thank the Committee for raising this important bill, and urge you to act favorably on it.

The other proposal I want to comment on is **Raised Bill No. 7007, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION.** As I am sure everyone is aware, this bill is the result of a process involving considerable outcry from the Department's constituency and some very thoughtful analysis and recommendations by the Department itself. As I testified last year, the term "mental retardation" was adopted in a progressive attempt to move beyond pejorative clinical terms that had been used by professionals to classify people (e.g. clinical classifications such as "idiot", "moron", "hi-grade", "low grade", "feeble-minded", etc.). It is ironic that that term has also come to be used as a vernacular put-down. While the professional organizations that debate and ultimately define such things are moving toward conceptual alternatives (e.g. "intellectual disability") - alternatives that may or may not ultimately escape vernacular degradation - the least we can do is remove reference to the term "mental retardation" from the name of the agency through which people receive services. A newly named "Department of Developmental Services" accurately describes the type

of assistance people can currently expect from the agency, and allows for future expansion or clarification of eligibility mandates without requiring them, or creating the impression that they already exist. I urge you to support this measure.

Thank you for your consideration. If there are any questions about our position on these bills, or if Committee members would like to discuss my comments, please feel free to contact me.

003647

Advocates for people with intellectual disabilities
and related developmental disabilities

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Executive Director
Lynn C. Warner

Testimony re:
S.B. #1220, "An Act Concerning The Birth-To-Three Program"

H.B. #7007, "An Act Renaming The Department of Mental Retardation"

S.B. #683, "An Act Concerning Early Childhood Lead Poisoning"
and
H.B. #7008, "An Act Concerning The Department of Mental Retardation"

Before the Committee on Public Health
March 14, 2007

Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon. I am Lynn Warner, the Executive Director of the Arc of Connecticut, a 54-year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We have 23 local chapters throughout the State that provide supports, services, and advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

I am here today to testify on **S.B. #1220, "An Act Concerning The Birth-To-Three Program"**

We are pleased that the Governor's budget and Raised Bill #1220 have proposed to restore and expand the valuable Birth-to-Three program for babies and toddlers with disabilities and their families. This would restore eligibility to very low birth weight newborns, and for children with significant delays in speech and biological risk factors, it would also expand eligibility for children with mild or unilateral hearing loss.

BUT, if adequate funding isn't appropriated to the private nonprofit agencies providing these crucial services – it will become impossible to meet the needs of even more children or retain qualified and dedicated therapists at a reasonable wage – let alone attract new ones. If there is

Formerly Connecticut Association for Retarded Citizens (CARC)

The Arc/Connecticut, Inc. Member Chapters: Directions, Inc., Middletown / Greater Enfield Arc / Family Options, Watertown / Arc of Farmington Valley / Friends of New Milford, Inc. / Litchfield County Arc / LOV-Arc, Westbrook / MARC, Inc., Manchester / MARC: Community Resources, Portland / Arc of Meriden-Wallingford / Arc of Greater New Haven / Arc/New London County / Options, Unlimited / Arc of Plainville / Arc of Quinebaug Valley / SARAH Inc., Guilford / SARAH Seneca Residential Services / SARAH Tuxis Residential Services / STAR, Norwalk / Arc of Southington / Tri County Arc, Columbia / Waterbury Arc / WeCAHR, Danbury

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recognition of the value of early intervention, the valuable services that are provided by these agencies *must also be recognized* and their efforts must be supported with consistent and adequate long term funding.

H.B. #7007, "An Act Renaming The Department of Mental Retardation"
A name change for DMR has been discussed and pushed for many years. As a matter of fact, nearly 10 years ago, Arc/CT teamed up with People First to re-name the Department. The terms "retardation," "retarded," etc. have become extremely negative over the years and are now referred to as the "r" words. These words are now normally used as everyday slag often replacing old slang like "idiot" or "moron" – which were also once the official words to describe people with intellectual disabilities. It is long past time to make a change and we are very pleased that with your support DMR will be renamed The Department of Developmental Services! ***It is about time!***

Along with this Bill, we hope that the Connecticut Legislature will continue to recognize the importance of respectful language for new and revised laws by requiring the use of terminology that puts the person before the disability.

S.B. #683, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Lead Poisoning"
Committee Bill #683 establishes a system to track special education services for children with high lead levels and then analyze the data obtained to assess the children's growth as well as the effectiveness of the early intervention services for these students. Studies conducted for more than 25 years report conclusively that lead poisoning causes developmental delays. It makes good sense to determine if services designed to minimize the negative effects of lead poisoning are effective and if not – why not?

The Arc of Connecticut has always worked to eradicate lead poisoning – and will continue to support such measures aimed at minimizing the detrimental effects until lead poisoning is completely eliminated from our society.

H.B. #7008, "An Act Concerning The Department of Mental Retardation"
Finally, The Arc of Connecticut has no objections to H.B. #7008 and would support your approval of the Bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative

"Enhancing the effectiveness of disability activism by organizing and empowering individuals, families, groups and organizations"

Public Health Committee

March 14, 2007

My name is Stan Kosloski and I am the Project Director of the Disability Advocacy Collaborative, a statewide cross-disability coalition of activists. The Collaborative draws from the collective strength and energy of individuals with disabilities and families, as well as the dozens of advocacy organizations that exist in the state, in order to have a meaningful impact on the way services and supports are provided children and adults with disabilities.

I would like to speak in favor of Raised House Bill 7007, AN ACT RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION and Raised Senate Bill 1194 AN ACT CONCERNING NOTIFICATION TO THE OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INMATE SUICIDES AND DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES CLIENT DEATHS.

Regarding Raised House Bill 7007, one of the major handicaps preventing people with disabilities from achieving their rightful place in society alongside their peers is not their disabilities but the stigma often associated with disability. This phenomenon reveals itself in the societal attitudes toward the disability which we have previously referred to as "mental retardation". Renaming DMR will not eliminate the stigma, but it will demonstrate Connecticut's changing attitudes toward disability, and will lay the foundation for attitudinal changes still to come.

Think for a minute how agencies like the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the African American Affairs Commission, and the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission might have been named if they were created 50 years ago. I dare say the terms "Women", "African American", and "Latino and Puerto Rican" would not have been the words legislators of that

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The Collaborative is supported by a grant from the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and in-kind support from the University of Connecticut Center on Disabilities and Communities, inc

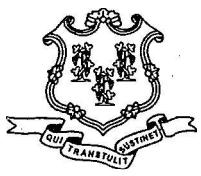
era would have chosen to use. And I can guarantee you that with the evolution of the civil rights movement, advocates for those constituencies would have come to you with great ferocity, insisting that whatever negatively charged terms were being used be changed to reflect respect and value for the affected populations. The concern of people with intellectual disabilities is no different.

Changing the name of DMR will not make the disability disappear, but it will move us as a state a few steps closer to the day when the stigma associated with disability will become less a barrier, and when people with labels will be seen as people first, and the disability will assume a secondary consideration, as it should.

I would also ask your support for Raised Senate Bill 1194 AN ACT CONCERNING NOTIFICATION TO THE OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION INMATE SUICIDES AND DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES CLIENT DEATHS. This legislation will allow for an independent review of inmate suicides and client deaths where necessary, and in the long run will serve as a safeguard, protecting our most vulnerable citizens from future harm.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.

003701



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

March 14, 2007

HB 7007 An Act Concerning Renaming the Department of Mental Retardation.

Good morning Sen. Handley, Rep. Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee.

The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities encourages your support for HB 7007 An Act Concerning Renaming the Department of Mental Retardation as the Department of Developmental Services.

My name is Angela Spino, I am a Disability Policy Specialist for the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities as well as a parent whose child receives services from what is currently known as the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR).

The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, and I as a parent, believe that the time is long overdue for Connecticut to join most of the rest of the states and remove the term mental retardation from state statutes. The word "retardation" is offensive to many people in Connecticut, and we, as a state, have no business using a word that is hurtful to our fellow citizens, let alone using it in an official capacity.

At the same time, our position on this issue is one of frustration. A name change will not change the Department's mission. Our frustration is that so much time and energy has been spent simply on changing a name when so many of Connecticut's citizens with developmental, and other, disabilities who do not fit the criteria to receive services from the Department, go without services and supports.

Today, the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities asks you to do what we must do, that is, change the Department's name to the Department of Developmental Services. This change eliminates the term mental retardation and puts the emphasis on services rather than disability label. Equally as important, this name change also simultaneously reflects the current service mission of the Department and enables future expansion of services and supports based on behavioral and developmental criteria rather than disability label. This last point is very important, because tomorrow we will ask you to change the Department's mission, for we will not live up to our obligation as a society until every Connecticut citizen with developmental disabilities has the opportunity to receive services and supports.

Thank you.

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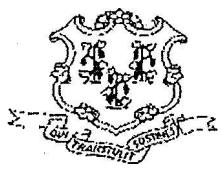

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

PETER H. O'MEARA
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION
COMMISSIONER PETER H. O'MEARA
TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
M H 14, 2007

HB 7008
SB 1220
SB 683
SB 1340 HB 6723

Good Morning. Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Peter O'Meara, and on behalf of the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) I am here to testify on several bills before your committee today. HB 7007 and HB 7008 were both submitted by DMR this session.

H.B. 7007, AN ACT RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION.
This bill is a result of the DMR Name Change study required by Public Act 06-92 that passed during the 2006 legislative session. The act required DMR to solicit input regarding a name change for the Department from clients and families receiving services provided by the department, advocates of person with mental retardation and other interested parties. The required report was submitted to the Governor, the Office of Policy and Management and the Public Health Committee on December 29, 2006. DMR would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their thoughts and opinions on this issue. The proposed new name for the department is **"Department of Developmental Services."**

There has been a national movement among self-advocates and others to use more respectful language when referring to individuals with disabilities. The challenge throughout this debate has been to contemplate how a suggested new name will withstand time in regards to evolving perspectives and perceptions that are constantly changing.

There has been increasing interest from advocates, families, and consumers nationally and specifically in Connecticut, in response to the term "mental retardation" because it is sometimes thought to be stigmatizing and offensive to people. However, the primary concern that has been raised in changing the name of the Department is that it might create an expectation of services for persons that DMR does not currently have the statutory authority or funding to serve.

As an agency whose mission is to promote respect and dignity for people with mental retardation, it is imperative that those who are supported by us feel respected, starting with the name of the agency that provides support to them.

Gathering input from many interested individuals has been an important step in this process of pursuing a statutory name change for the department. DMR took many steps to ensure that

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outreach on this issue was widespread throughout the state. These many steps are outlined in the Name Change report issued in December.

The Department contacted facilities staff in each of our three regional offices to solicit information on potential cost implications involved in a name change. The questionnaire also included a question regarding any potential implications of a change. Based on the results, we would put an estimate of ***approximately $50,000*** on a name change. Some of this cost could be spread out over a period of time or potentially avoided depending on the timeframe for implementation.

Many states serving individuals with mental retardation have removed the diagnosis from human service department names. Some use terms that refer to the service being provided rather than the population being served. Thus, a number have adopted the term "developmental services" to refer to the office, division or department responsible for serving individuals with developmental disabilities (e.g., NH, CA and NV). Still other states have consolidated responsibility for serving individuals with developmental AND physical disabilities within the same executive branch unit and assigned the agency a title that includes the word "disability" or "disabilities." An important note in this discussion is that the majority of changes in agency titles that have occurred came about as the result of an administrative, rather than legislative, action and frequently for reasons other than dissatisfaction with the agency's existing title. This is unlike in Connecticut, where the driving force for a name change has been a growing discontent with the term "mental retardation" among consumers and advocates.

DMR strongly recommends that legislation be as clear as possible, especially in reference to associated eligibility. Also, it is essential to the success of a name change that educating the public is addressed so that misconceptions are minimal and it is apparent as to who is eligible for support from the Department of Developmental Services. The name "Department of Developmental Services" is respectful of individuals who are currently served by DMR yet is also inclusive of individuals in the Birth to Three program and the Autism Pilot who do not have a diagnosis of mental retardation. In addition, it is consistent with other human service agencies in Connecticut that use a service related name rather than a disability related name.

References to the old name of the Department should be replaced with the new name however; it is not the intention to replace the words "mental retardation" throughout the statutes. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders "DSM-IV" (published by the American Psychiatric Association), still includes a diagnosis of "mental retardation." The DSM-IV is the standard for medical diagnosis in the United States. In addition, the DSM-IV diagnosis of mental retardation is the same as used in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9). As the terminology still continues to have a purpose in terms of a clinical diagnosis and in reference to eligibility, it will continue to be used in some places. As the Director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy has pointed out, eliminating all references to "mental retardation" could inadvertently affect the current legal standards for protective services. A majority of states, even the ones who have taken "mental retardation" out of their agency title, still use the term and define it. In addition, the terminology "mental retardation" is still applicable in regards to bigotry and bias statutes, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities' discrimination statutes, federal waiver classifications, certification for Intermediate Care Facilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

There needs to be limitations and constraints in any legislation regarding the timeframe for implementation and eligibility not changing so that the scope of the Department is clearly defined. We feel that our proposed language addresses these issues.

H.B. 7008, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION. This bill is composed of several agency proposals. I will outline each proposal separately:

The proposed deletions in Sections 1 and 2 of this bill refer to an evaluation of each DMR region's adherence to approved protocol used in determining which clients shall receive services and in selecting service providers. DMR produces an annual report (commonly referred to as the "Committee of Cognizance Report") to address the requirements in CGS 17a-212 and 17a-213. In addition, regional comparisons of Waiting List information and client populations are available quarterly and annually through the Department's Management Information Report (MIR). The MIR is distributed to a list of internal DMR staff. OPM & OFA also receive copies. It should be noted that the way DMR does business has changed recently and significantly as it has transitioned to having only three regions. Also, with the introduction of the new Medicaid Waivers and their rules, there are new systems of resource allocation based on fixed rates and Waiver Requirements.

Section 3 of this bill deletes the requirement of a report from 1996 that has been met (lines 43-46) and deletes an annual report describing the status of the reduction of the waiting list and the establishment of a Recreation and Respite Care Services Division (lines 53-61). DMR produces a quarterly Waiting list Report for the Appropriations and Public Health Committees that tracks residential placements and costs for the department as well as the reuse of existing resources. In addition, as mentioned above, DMR produces the MIR, which provides information on a quarterly basis including all placement activity by funding category as well as information about the planning list and projected needs. Due to budget constraints over past years, DMR does not have an established Recreation and Respite Care Service Division. However, any information regarding these services is included in the previously mentioned "Committee of Cognizance Report." Although there used to be a separate Recreation and Respite Report, it has not been done in several years. The report covered many of the same things that are in the Committee of Cognizance Report and also reported on the recreation staff and how many people they served. The layoffs and early retirement a few years ago impacted recreation staff and programs. The report stopped being produced as a stand-alone report around the same time that publicly provided recreation was significantly reduced.

Section 4 of this bill allows DCF and DMHAS to have access to DMR's abuse/neglect registry as requested by those agencies.

Section 5 of the bill deletes a requirement for the Southbury Training School (STS) Board of Trustees to review and co-prepare an annual report with the Director of STS for transmission to the Council on Mental Retardation for inclusion in a report to the Governor (lines 130-134). The Director of STS currently reports to the Commissioner any information regarding the status, operation and administration of STS for inclusion in the Commissioner's Annual Report to the

Quentin T. Hughes III's Testimony on HR Bill #7007 re: DMR Name Change

I think "Department of Mental Retardation" should be renamed "Department of Developmental Services" because I think the "R" word, which is retardation, tends to be used as a label suggesting that a person with disabilities has no hope of accomplishing much in life. It is a word that's demeaning, and hurtful. The new title, "Department of Developmental Services", will help to eliminate the "R" word and therefore would encourage people with disabilities to enjoy life, do the things they can and like to do and contribute to society. It would encourage them to realize their dreams and potentials.

003709

Yes I Can

HB7007

Changing the name of DMR
Department of Mental Retardation

My name, Chelsea Lodge. I was born with disabilities and I am a client of the DMR. I can do many things that other people do, and I do the best I can. I think they should change the name of the DMR because being called Mentally Retarded makes me feel that I am not as good as other people.

I work and I do my jobs well. I was trained to do my work just like people without disabilities. I don't want to be referred to as mentally retarded because it sounds like I am a lower class person. I get upset about this.

When people hear that

someone is retarded they
thing they are odd or
something.
I am a person with dis-
abilities and I am as
good as anyone else and
I am good at what I do.
I don't think I am "retarded"

HB7007

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will **always** hurt me.

Good morning. My name is Anne Eason and I am a special education attorney with an office located on 10 Wall Street in Norwalk. Most of my clients are students with intellectual disabilities. I also co-authored a book, *IEP and Inclusion Tips*, which focuses on students with intellectual disabilities. Most important, I am mother to Eva, a delightful 17-year-old student, fully included at New Canaan High School, who happens to have Down syndrome.

Today I made the decision to take a day off from work and drive 90 minutes because I wanted to share how very important it is for DMR to change its antiquated name. The world has changed and certain names that used to be OK are now unacceptable. Words matter. When someone calls someone else a retard, it hurts. I personally cringe, as do each of my 4 children. The name Department of Mental Retardation needs to be changed. I suggest that it is called the Department of Developmental Services.

After changing the name, I hope that eventually DMR will broaden its scope of services, beyond just individuals with intellectual disabilities. There are no services for adults with other significant disabilities, such as Autism. It is unfair to serve only a selected part of the population with significant disabilities. I do realize that expanding population that DMR serves will mean less money for everyone, such as my child. But there is no justification to support some and not others. One reason that DMR is so financially stretched is because it shamefully continues to keep the Southbury Training School open, Connecticut's last remaining institution, and then it throws the remaining crumbs to those of us who live in the community. I would urge you to close down the Southbury monstrosity. Locking away humans with disabilities is an outdated mode of providing services to persons with intellectual disabilities. Then use that money to serve all individuals with developmental disabilities in the community, under the umbrella of The Department of Developmental Services.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

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March 14, 2007

003712

HB7007

Hello, my name is Ginger Burke. I am sorry that I could not be there today but I am glad I have to opportunity to give you my testimony.

I have a disability and I am served by DMR. I think it is really important that the name be changed. Most people don't understand how we feel about the "R" word. Kids at school call each other that word as a put down and the agency that supports us uses that same word! Kids in school need to be educated not to use that word and it would help if DMR would stop using it.
People look at us like we are different. We get stared at, made fun of and called names. The word "retarded" makes people think of a person who can't do anything. People with disabilities are just the same as everyone else! We have jobs, homes, apartments, friends – all we want is respect from society. Changing the name would help to get us some respect.
If we can make the public understand how we feel maybe they will stop using that word. Please, change the name of DMR.

Thank you,
Ginger Burke
Middlefield, CT

3/14/07

HB 7007

Hello my name is Bill Berry. I am president of the Guardian Angels group, one of the Middletown chapters of People First CT. Once again I am here today to talk about the R word in D.M.R. I want the word "retarded" removed. I want it changed to the Department of Developmental Services. I don't know anyone who fits that "R" phrase. To me the R word is very offensive-it is the same as swearing. People should have their mouth washed out with soap when they say this word as well. The word isn't used at all in my house. I don't even think it should be printed in the dictionary.
When I was in school kids called me retarded at least once every day. I would go home from school and cry. Kids can be real cruel when it comes to the R word. Sometimes even some adults as well. The R word can also hurt a person mentally. It can really scare you. For example for years I wouldn't even go grocery shopping or go in a restaurant.
I was always afraid people were staring at me. Today however, things have changed for me. I try not to let things bother me anymore. I have more friends today then I did growing up. I am even thinking about living independently. People have to understand that anyone who uses the R word is ignorant and don't know better. That is why we are here again today so you will understand and you will know better. I really hope this issue gets resolved soon. I am really getting fed-up with the R word.

Hopefully after all the testimonies given today you will hear us and help us get rid of that nasty R word forever!

Thank you for listening to me today.

Bill Berry
Middletown, CT