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State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



Peter H. O'Meara
Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

**TESTIMONY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**S.B. 533- An Act Establishing a Uniform State Licensing Process
for Private Community Based Providers**

Senators Gerratana and Welch, Representatives Ritter and Perillo and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Peter O'Meara of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 533- An Act Establishing a Uniform State Licensing Process for Private Community Based Providers. My apologies that this was not submitted in time for the February 23rd public hearing, but I hope that you will still find my testimony useful as you evaluate this proposal.

The purpose of this bill as stated is "to ease the licensure burden currently faced by private providers who are required to file duplicative applications for multiple state agencies and achieve efficiencies and cost reductions in administrative expenses for both the state and the private providers." Given the current fiscal situation that Connecticut is faced with, DDS can certainly appreciate the need to evaluate processes in state government in the interest of finding efficiencies. It is unclear from the way the bill is written, whether the purpose is specific to the operation of facilities run by private providers or to the process which approves the provider to contract with agencies as a provider of DDS services. DDS has a few thoughts on this legislation if it is intended that the Department be included in it.

If the bill is intended to focus on facilities, DDS licenses private provider agencies to operate numerous residential facilities across our state including 800 community living arrangements or "group homes". The licensure process is a component of our oversight of providers to ensure an acceptable level of quality in all settings operated or contracted by DDS. Even if the licensure process was removed from DDS, our department would still need to somehow be involved as both the funder and as the department responsible for the individuals receiving services. DDS licensing regulations help ensure compliance with state and federal regulations, the department's policies and procedures and the requirements of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding Connecticut's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Comprehensive and Individual and Family Support Waivers.

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DDS licensing requirements are set by state regulation, department policy and the requirements of the federal HCBS waiver. State agencies operate under differing requirements and mandates, and differing legal relationships with their respective consumers. This would need to be considered if the plan to design and operate one licensing entity with universal standards and requirements was to move forward.

DDS is committed to quality services and supports for the individuals that we serve. While DDS can appreciate the effort to streamline processes, the agency respectfully requests that the implications of any change to the licensure process related to our service system be carefully evaluated. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on this proposal. Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with any questions.