

**DDS**

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

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Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

March 21, 2018

Senators Doyle and Kissel, Representatives Tong and Rebimbas and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on [H.B. No. 5546](#) **AN ACT CONCERNING LARCENY AGAINST AN INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED PERSON**.

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for raising this bill, which enhances the penalties for persons who commit larceny in the form of embezzlement, false pretenses or false promise on an individual with intellectual disability. The provisions of this bill are very much in line with DDS's ongoing efforts to reduce and eliminate financial exploitation of persons with intellectual disability. DDS's Division of Investigations investigates and substantiates instances when an individual with intellectual disability has been financially exploited by a caregiver, employee or guardian. If a substantiation of financial exploitation results in the termination of a DDS employee or a DDS qualified provider employee, the former employee then may be placed on the DDS Abuse and Neglect Registry as per section 17a-247a, et seq. CGS.

As individuals with intellectual disability continue to move into communities, there is an increased risk of unscrupulous actors perpetrating financial crimes against these persons who may be vulnerable because of their disability or because of inexperience with the responsibilities of living in a community setting. In addition to protecting persons with disabilities, this enhancement to the penalties for larceny protects persons who are living within strict funding parameters and have very little, if any, disposable income. When financial fraud is committed against these persons, they often have few resources to make up for any lost funds, which may lead to these individuals being placed in dangerous or unhealthy situations.

DDS believes that including persons with intellectual disability in the list of individuals vulnerable to financial exploitation (conserved persons, persons 60 or over, persons who are blind or have a physical disability) is one more way to deter those who would target individuals with intellectual disability as prey for financial fraud, scams and embezzlement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony on [H.B. No. 5546](#) **AN ACT CONCERNING LARCENY AGAINST AN INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED PERSON**. If you have any questions, please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066.

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