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Good afternoon,

My name is Kathy Kanya and I live in Wethersfield. I appreciate this opportunity to submit comments regarding the DDS Draft Five Year plan, which was developed by the Department of Developmental Services.

Our son, Brian, is a 21 year old young man in his final year of school at a specialized program at the American School for the Deaf. He will be transitioning to the adult supports within the DDS system at the end of this academic year. As Brian's caregiver, this plan is critical to his future health, safety and well being, as well as his ability to receive the supports necessary to participate in his community. Ensuring that our loved ones live in supportive and inclusive community settings is essential, and the programs and services developed by DDS must reflect this approach.

Hearing from the participants, families, caregivers, and friends of persons with intellectual disabilities is crucial when planning for the future of the Department of Developmental Services. All of these stakeholders have valuable information and feedback to provide. We are no longer in a one-size fits all world and we can learn from other states when creating new supported living environments and options.

I feel that the DDS Five Year Plan should be revised to include more individualized, supported living options, affordable community-based housing options, and resources that support person-centered planning and employment progression. There should be an emphasis on increased training and education for families and support personnel, as well as improved medical and behavioral emergency support. A priority of DDS should be to have increased collaboration opportunities with supported individuals and their families.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I look forward to your feedback, seeing the revised plan and the opportunity to work together in this process.

Kind Regards,

Kathy and Rick Kanya  
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