



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Morna A. Murray, J.D.
Commissioner

Jordan A. Scheff
Deputy Commissioner

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

March 19, 2015

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle, and members of the Education Committee. I am Morna A. Murray, J.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on [H.B. No. 7016](#) **AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MORE COMMISSION SPECIAL EDUCATION SELECT WORKING GROUP.**

This bill would implement many of the recommendations of the MORE Commission's Special Education working group. Several of the working group's recommendations would involve collaboration between state agencies, including the Department of Developmental Services, in transitioning students from special education programs into adult service programs. DDS is aware that transition planning, properly done, can ease disruptions in a student's life as well as ensure a successful integration into adult services.

Over the past several years, DDS has been able to coordinate transitions for students who are graduating from or aging-out of their Local Education Agency's services. With dedicated funding in the DDS budget for graduates and age-outs to transition into day service or employment programs, DDS has worked with students, their families, and their school systems to continue appropriate services so that skills learned in school are reinforced and developed without interruption in their day or employment programs.

DDS does have questions about section 2 of [H.B. No. 7016](#), which requires yearly reporting by DDS on federal funds received from Medicaid for special education and related services. Medicaid does not reimburse special education programs. Although DDS does fund some services for children and youth, these services do not come under the heading of special education. It is our understanding that special education programs and services are funded through the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Local Education Agencies.

While DDS faces a difficult budget year, we look forward to working with all interested parties to see how interagency collaborations may improve transitions for students from special education programs into adult service programs. During the last year, DDS also participated in the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee study on Transitional Services for Youth and Young Adults with

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001
460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.ct.gov/dds ♦ e-mail: ddsct.co@ct.gov
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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This study and its recommendations for transition services for individuals with ASD can be found at http://www.cga.ct.gov/pri/2014_ASD.asp.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on [**H.B. No. 7016**](#). You may contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 if you have any questions.