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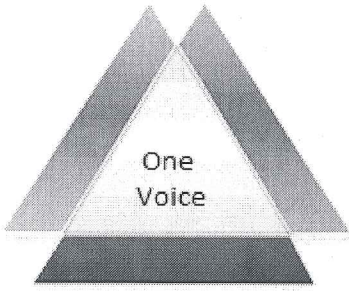
Testimony: Public Hearing on Taxes  
May 11, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Melissa Marshall and I am here today in my capacity as Coordinator of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance. As our name implies, we represent people with intellectual, psychiatric, physical, sensory and other disabilities and their families. I want to express the Alliance's support for the Appropriations and Finance Committee's budget. They have worked hard to develop a budget that is much closer to meeting the needs of all of Connecticut's residents than the other proposed budgets.

We need a system that generates enough funds to provide critical services for people with disabilities including intellectual disabilities, brain injuries, physical and sensory disabilities and mental health needs. Without funding for community based services and legal services, the state will spend money on other more expensive services like emergency room visits, hospitalizations and incarceration. In addition, the state will lose revenue from people with disabilities who could be working if they were provided equipment and other services that support them in being tax payers.

The Finance Committee proposal is not simply a plan to raise taxes. It is a comprehensive plan to promote balance and equity in our tax system by:

- eliminating costly tax exemptions (\$371 million) for example, computer and data processing services (\$147 million)
- expanding the scope of the sales and use tax; primarily services used by people with higher incomes and large corporations (\$454 million) for



example, Engineering Services (\$94 million) and General Management Consulting Services (\$23 million)

- establishing a tax bracket for couples earning more than \$1million and individuals earning more than \$500,000 (still less than neighboring states)
- REDUCING the sales and use tax (6.35% to 5.85%)
- ALLOCATING millions of dollars to cities and towns to reduce property taxes They have made tough decisions in a difficult budget environment, while recognizing the state's responsibility to care for the neediest among us

Right now, Connecticut faces difficult tradeoffs, and without additional revenue from the Finance Committee package, many people who rely on services to live in the community will lose those services.

While no one wants new taxes, but we simply cannot sustain the damage that will be done if we do not have additional revenue.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.