



NEWS FROM The Arc Connecticut:

Parents & families from around the state have spent the past year meeting with legislators in their homes to enlighten them on the lack of funding and the myriad issues families face when trying to access DDS supports. Families have also shared, in a very personal way, your fears about the security of your children's future. These house meetings have, in every case, been powerful and transformative experiences for both legislators and families. The willingness of so many families to their share personal stories has resulted in a group of legislators who have made a solid commitment to partnering with families.

Several of these legislators have also agreed form an "I/DD caucus", a group within the legislature which will work in coalition to protect and improve DDS services. Senator Beth Bye who was very moved by her meeting with families in West Hartford, has agreed to head up the I/DD caucus. Senator Bye very well respected and has a reputation as a tough fighter for what she believes in. In addition, she has also just been appointed chair of the Appropriations Committee, which is the committee of cognizance over matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies. This is very good news for our cause.

We heard excellent news this morning that the I/DD caucus plans to sponsor a "Family Hearing Day" at the capitol on January 22, 2014! Never before, have legislators reached out to families in this way and invited them to come to Hartford to share their stories with other legislators and a wider audience. This is unprecedented it is a fantastic opportunity for families who are looking to make change.

Other legislators who have made a commitment to be on the caucus are Representative John Hampton (Simsbury), Representative Jay Case (Winsted, Torrington, Colebrook, Goshen), Senator Paul Doyle (Cromwell, Middletown, Newington, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield), Representative Mike Demicco (Farmington), Representative Jason Rojas (East Hartford, Manchester) and Representative Ed Vargas (Hartford). Senator Bye's office will extend an invitation to every legislator in the House & the Senate to come the hearing as well.

The hearing will be on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 from 11:00a-1pm in hearing room 1D of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

If we want legislators to remain committed to us, then we need to show them how committed we are to our children and our families by showing up. It is incumbent upon all of us to begin working now on getting the word out to every family we know around the state who wants a full funded system that will provide an array of supports to *all who need them!*

If you haven't had a house meeting with your legislators but would like to, contact me.

If you can't have a meeting but want your legislators to hear from you and other families, call them and personally invite them to the hearing.

If you have met with your legislator but they aren't on the caucus yet, call them, email them and ask them to join Senator Bye, John Hampton, Jay Case and these other legislators on the I/DD caucus.

Please feel free to contact me at 860 874-8100 with any questions.

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