



Westchester Independent Living Center, Inc.

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September 24, 2014

TO: Senator Max Baucus
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
RE: S.799 Community Choice Act

Dear Senator Baucus:

I work as a systems advocate for the Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC) and for the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network. My work is to promote and ensure, through systems change, the full integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of community life. I support the implementation of the Community Choice Act as one of the most strategic ways we can achieve this fundamental objective.

Thousands of New Yorkers with disabilities in need of long-term care support are currently segregated in nursing facilities and other institutions – not by their own choosing – but by policies that channel millions of tax dollars through Medicaid to warehouse them. Thousands more in our community are at risk of being forced into these profiteering institutions due to the lack of funding for community-based attendant services and supports. The Community Choice Act would allow us the dignity of choice to stay in our own homes, allowing us to maximize our independence through consumer-controlled, activities of daily living supports and related support programs.

WILC has successfully been utilizing the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) waiver for the past seven years to help individuals regain their independence through the assistance of independent living skills training services and other community support programs. We have over 170 consumers enrolled in the program and have provided resources to over 1,200 additional individuals, the overall majority of whom have reported experiencing a significant increase in their quality of life. The utilization of support systems have allowed our consumers in the TBI program to live in their own homes/apartments, to find employment and to actively participate in community activities.

The provisions within the Community Choice Act will allow the same options for individuals in need of long-term health care supports and services to exercise their basic human right to choose how and where they want to live.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Tarricone
Systems Advocacy Coordinator