

Family Empowerment Task Force Newsletter Summer 2012, Vol. 1, No. 4.

Topics of Interest

The 2012 election season has begun!

Candidates (incumbents and challengers) have been announced for almost all of Connecticut's state House and Senate districts. What do these candidates know about our concerns? What do they know about the impact of the DDS budgets and policies on our lives?

We should expect the incumbents already to be aware of our issues through their service in the legislature. The DDS budget and new waiver policies were all subject to public hearings and debate. (For example, the content in Public Act 12-33 had eleven hours of public hearing in the Labor Committee and twelve hours of debate in the General Assembly.) We know incumbents' positions through their votes. At www.cga.gov you can look up the votes on any bill.

Most challengers have not had the same opportunity to engage in these issues, so we must raise the issues in their campaigns. Know who the challengers are in your local districts. Attend their events and find their web sites to express your concerns. If a candidate is not familiar with your issue then educate them. If you feel strongly about a candidate, then help with their campaign (or perhaps with their opponent's.)

We will be electing the people who will decide the future of DDS services. We need legislators who will listen and understand.

Please learn about the candidates in the next four months then vote accordingly in November.

"Democracy insures that we shall be governed no better than we deserve."

- George Bernard Shaw

Please visit our website and our on-line discussion groups for the latest news and opinions.

About the FETF

The Family Empowerment Task Force (FETF) is an informal, unincorporated, organization of parents, siblings, guardians, caregivers and self-advocates that works to sustain, enhance and grow the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) that are offered by DDS through its private provider network by: 1) Developing a supportive network of families and individuals who receive services; 2) Educating families about DDS services; and 3) Educating legislators and public officials about the needs of families.

Events

Come and meet candidates for the 2013 General Assembly!

Candidates want to meet with families of individuals who rely on services from DDS and we are organizing meetings with many of them. These meetings are being organized by parent volunteers in each district. This is your opportunity to influence the campaigns. To find out about meetings with candidates in your districts, check our website, our message boards on Yahoo and Facebook, or send us an email to family-empowerment@comcast.net. Likewise if you would like help organizing a meeting in your district.

SAVE THE DATE! On **Saturday, October 13, 2012**, we will hold our second **Conference at the Capitol** in the Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol Building. Our theme is, "**What is YOUR Five Year Plan?**" After an introductory presentation of the risks posed by current demographic and fiscal realities we will offer brief presentations by a panel of Connecticut families who are using different service models. Then we will have some group discussion with the panel and candidates who are running for seats in the Connecticut General Assembly. We hope the presence of the candidates will attract people just four weeks before Election Day.

We hold **local meetings** for families where we share information about the FETF and DDS. You may request an informational meeting near to you by email to family-empowerment@comcast.net.

For more information about upcoming events, check our website and our groups on Yahoo or Facebook – or email to family-empowerment@comcast.net

Join us on the Internet

Website: <http://family-empowerment.weebly.com>

Facebook: CT DDS Family Empowerment Task Force

Yahoo: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/family-empowerment/>

Email: family-empowerment@comcast.net

Support the FETF

You may support the FETF with a donation to our new nonprofit fiscal agent, Raising Voices for Action, Inc. Make your check payable to Raising Voices for Action, Inc. and please note on the check that it is for the FETF.

Mail your donations to the FETF, c/o Raising Voices for Action, Inc., 17 C Woodland Street, Vernon, CT 06066.

Thank you!