

House Republican Press Release

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REPRESENTATIVE O'NEILL : APPOINTMENT HELPS ENSURE CONTINUITY AT SOUTHBURY TRAINING SCHOOL



HARTFORD- State Representative Arthur J. O'Neill, R-Southbury, today spoke on the House Floor in favor of the reappointment of Peter O'Meara, of Essex, as the state's Commissioner of Mental Retardation. As head of the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), O'Meara has done much to make improvements at Southbury Training School, said Rep. O'Neill. O'Meara's

nomination was unanimously approved by the House today.

DMR provides a wide range of supports and services for citizens of Connecticut with mental retardation.

Southbury Training School (STS) was built in the 1930's as a home for individuals with Mental Retardation. Admissions closed in 1986, when 1,111 individuals lived there. According to DMR, more than 60 percent of the approximately 594 residents have been residents for over 30 years. The average age of the current resident population is 53 years old and a majority of them have chosen to continue living at STS. With this aging population, Southbury Training School is slowly becoming a home for seniors.

“Southbury Training School is the largest DMR facility in the state and remains one of the largest employers and landowners in Southbury,” said Rep. O'Neill. “Peter O'Meara has done great work to move the training school into the future and in my opinion, is clearly one of best commissioners DMR has ever had. His reappointment helps ensure continuity of services and programs at this facility.”

Prior to his appointment as DMR Commissioner, O'Meara directed facilities in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, served as the Administrator of a free-standing skilled nursing facility serving older people with mental retardation, served as a board member of an agency that provided supports for children with special needs, and established a material resource library on the history of mental retardation.