

House Bill # 5666
Testimony from Doti Dienst

My name is Doti Dienst. I live in Manchester, Connecticut where I finished raising my four children. My third son, Richard was born in July 1960 at Fort Miley^{*}, Kansas. His father, my husband, was an infantry officer stationed there. My son was diagnosed at the age of three with Autism. However, because my husband was in the military and we moved constantly world-wide, he didn't get any services until the age of 11. Because our son was not labeled with "mental retardation", our family had to incur the cost of 16 to 18 thousand dollars a year for five years while he attended the Colburn School.

My marriage ended while he was at Colburn School and support payments ended for each child on their 18th birthday. I work as a teacher at Manchester schools and second jobs continuously to keep the roof over our heads.

Richard has worked at custodial jobs for many years. He has worked at Friendly's in Vernon over 20 years, but his hours are few. He does not drive so I drive him at 5:30 AM six days a week and some evenings. He is friendly, is a good reader, is honest and reliable. He has great difficulty with math and social interactions. SSI has turned him down several times. I worry what will happen to him when I am no longer here.

I support House Bill 5666 which furthers the continuation of the Adult Autism Pilot Program for services to help my son and others like him in Connecticut who need help to survive.

Thank you.

Doti Dienst

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