

## Hayes, Katherine

---

**From:** John Voket [John@thebee.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2009 10:04 AM  
**To:** Friis, John  
**Subject:** TESTIMONY RAISED BILL 1142 SECTION 4 & 5 OPPOSED

TESTIMONY RAISED BILL 1142 SECTION 4 & 5 OPPOSED

Dear Education Committee Representative:

I am writing today as both a member of the statewide media, and a parent of a special needs child, in urging your OPPOSITION to RAISED BILL 1142 SECTION 4 & 5.

By opposing this bill you would be doing every child with a disability and their parents/caregivers a huge favor. This bill would do 2 things that are detrimental to children with disabilities:

Raised Bill 1142, Section 4 (d)(1) would shift the burden of proof in a due process onto the party who initiated the hearing - which is almost without exception the parents of the child. So, the only people who will be able to go to due process with any kind of certainty that they will get a fair hearing are those who can afford to have an attorney representing them long before they are forced to consider due process. This is indeed a bill to give "relief to school districts" at the cost of individual children and families.

CT and many other states have traditionally assigned the burden to districts since it is their obligation to provide FAPE, and since they have access to all of the decision makers, evaluations, and, typically, expert witnesses. Parents do not. Therefore, it has only seemed fair that if I parent challenges the appropriateness of the program to which they are legally entitled, the school must show they offered an appropriate program.

Raised Bill 1142, Section 5 (b)

Would change the current requirement that school districts provide special ed services through the school year in which a child turns 21 to exactly their 21st birthday. This will impact thousands of children and families throughout the state. This does not provide an appropriate for DDS to ramp up services to meet the needs of this group, so essentially, they will be without any kind of day program in all likelihood, home with no support except that provided by their families.

It's left to the States under IDEA to determine the end of eligibility past typical "graduation." Right now it's through the school year of their 21st birthday. Many, many states have it until then or right up to 22.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

John Voket  
Public Affairs Director  
CoxRadio CT  
Associate Editor  
The Newtown Bee

Remember that if the opportunities for great deeds should never come, the opportunities for good deeds are renewed day by day. The thing for us to long for is the goodness, not the glory. - F.W. Faber

This message is intended for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged or confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by returning the original email, and then deleting the message. - Thank you.