

Friis, John

From: lleal222@optonline.net
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2009 7:45 AM
To: Friis, John
Subject: TESTIMONY RAISED Bill 1142 SECTION 4 & 5 OPPOSED

I am writing to oppose Bill 1142 because I think that it is unfair and detrimental to families that have children with disabilities. My son is severely autistic. We have gone to due process for early intervention, preschool and elementary school. We have won each time because school districts in general do not care about our kids. They have a band aid approach to autism and do not realize that within this population of children there are very different needs. We are lucky that we could fight for our son. We almost lost our house. We are out \$50.00. However, in the end he got what he needed. I cannot say that this would be the same deal for a child that cannot afford an attorney. The kids in Bridgeport would never have a chance and that is unfair. This bill makes it easier for school districts to balance their budgets but puts MORE burden on families that are already financially, emotionally and mentally wiped out! You should know districts DO NOT offer appropriate staff and programming for kids with autism. Look at what just recently happened in Fairfield where a district teacher forced a child to work in school half naked because the autistic girl was over attached to the stripes on her shirt. Please vote to OPPOSE BILL 1142.

Also it is important to take these kids to age 21. The transition time is critical. My son is 17 and right now his entire future is up in the air. Presently there is no place for him to go at 21 that would suit his needs. We need this time to figure out a plan for him. It will be impossible for me to care for him at home while trying to work to support my other child in college. The state has to do something about the "flood" of autistic adults that will occur in the next few years. WE NEED ADULT PROGRAMS WITH BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT to help maintain a healthy place for these individuals to contribute to society. As a society will have to help these disabled people that cannot help themselves.

Sincerely
Marian Leal
Fairfield CT