

Friis, John

From: patricia moonan [pmoonan@att.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2009 10:57 AM
To: Friis, John
Subject: Testimony-Education Committee SB 1142

I am providing written testimony concerning bill SB 1142 that will have an adverse effect on students with special education needs in the state of CT. As the mother of a fifteen year old girl who experienced a peri-natal stroke, thus causing auditory processing difficulties that have pervasively affected all aspects of her ability to learn, I am well versed in dealing with a public school district with regards to special education. For thirteen years I have attended IEP meetings and have served as an advocate for my daughter-to no avail. As my daughter entered Middle School, my ability to advocate for her was frustrated by teachers and school administrators alike. I felt more and more powerless to hold the school district accountable in providing my daughter an appropriate education. I spent thousands of dollars having my daughter tested by neuro-psychologists, educational psychologists, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists in order to get a better picture of what an appropriate education would look like for her. I provided the school district with this expert information only to have it tossed aside. For all three years of middle school my daughter scored in the below basic range in all areas on her CMAT's. Clearly an appropriate education was not being provided for her. Please know that my late husband was a lawyer and I work as a mediator for an agency that provides mediation services for the Juvenile and G/A courts in Fairfield County, and I have never brought a legal suit against anyone or any organization/corporation in my life. However, out of sheer frustration and with a feeling of complete powerlessness, I felt I had no choice but to file for due process against the school district for an appropriate education for my daughter. She started sixth grade reading at the third grade level and she finished the eight grade reading at the third grade level. Clearly no progress was made. The school district developed an IEP for high school that showed no attempt to remediate the reading. Hence, should this bill be passed, my daughter would be destined to an adult life reading beneath the level required to read an every day newspaper. The school district sees nothing wrong with this and they never would bring a due process suit against themselves! What kind of a job can you get reading at the third grade level? What effect will this have on society as a whole when students, like my daughter, get out of high school with their certificate of attendance diplomas, and they can't get a job that will enable them to live above the poverty level? How much will it cost the State of CT in the long run, when these individuals have to apply for food stamps and welfare over the course of their life time? My daughter, may have to stay in high school until she is 21 in order to make up for the three wasted years at the public middle school. Her birthday is September 25th. The way this bill is written, so many days into that school year, the public schools' responsibility will be terminated. My daughter receives Social Security under her fathers' death benefit, even Social Security continues to pay once a student turns 18 and COMPLETES that school year.

Finally, I want to leave you with a paraphrase of President Obama's own words concerning the need for an education-My daughter owes it not only to herself to get an education-but she owes it to her country as well. Please vote to defeat bill SB 1142!

Patricia M. Moonan
234 Fitch's Pass
Trumbull, CT 06611
203-445-9154