

Public Hearing: HB5691, An Act Concerning Postsecondary Tuition Assistance and Special Need Subsidies for Adopted Children

2/24/09

Good Morning Committee Chairs and Members of the Committee, my name is Ashley Marie Rodriguez Russo. I reside in the town of Hebron, CT. I am here today to testify on House/Senate Bill HB5691. I have been adopted now for five years. When I was six I was put in a shelter with my two brothers. From there I was in foster care with the same family for two years before they adopted us. When I lived in Bridgeport with my biological family, no one really cared if I went to school or not. So, some of the time I went to school, and some of the time I didn't. I actually liked school, and to this day that has not changed. I am now a sophomore in high school and have to start thinking of college. I have fought and worked hard to get the grades that I have today. If I still lived in Bridgeport I doubt that I would be getting honors every quarter. I have gotten the opportunity to excel in a great environment and to expand my learning and knowledge. I want to continue that. This is why this particular Bill is so important to me and family. It is not fair that other adoptive children are able to have this opportunity and we can't because we missed a deadline by a few months. Education to me is not a joke. I take it seriously. I want to be the first in my family to graduate college and to become a successful young woman. I have promised myself not to end up like my biological mother. She was a failure that let drugs and other things control her life. She didn't even get passed high school. I have already achieved more than she has. I still am in school, and I've played varsity soccer since freshman year, and I play soccer on a premier level all over the East Coast but I want to go way beyond that and this Bill would provide me an opportunity to keep that promise to myself. I have been through so much in my life but I have not let that bring me down or stop me. I'm not planning on stopping here. I am planning on doing big things in my life, and this Bill can assist me to do just that. Please consider adopting the new language in Bill 5691 and afford all Connecticut adoptive children an opportunity to benefit educationally through this very important Public Act. Lastly, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Ashley Marie Rodriguez Russo

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