

Testimony of Sean Glenn  
15 Camille Lane, West Simsbury  
Presented to the Judiciary Committee on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 regarding  
S.B. 1056, An Act Concerning Students' Rights to Free Speech

Thank you honorable Co-Chairpersons for allowing me to testify this afternoon. My name is Sean Glenn and I am a Junior at Simsbury High School and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. I am here today to speak in support of S.B. 1056, An Act Concerning Students' Rights to Free Speech.

As a student of the arts, I find it essential to finish my career as a high school student without the fear of punishment for self-expression. Students throughout history have always pushed the envelope in our search for identity, as we work to discover who we are. My free speech rights should not be impinged upon solely due to my status as a student.

American values have long held that censorship of speech is wrong, regardless of how uncomfortable it might make one feel. I believe it is in the best interest of schools in democratic societies to encourage self-expression, not suppress it, while also modeling responsible behavior to prepare us for our role as future community and global leaders.

American historian Henry Steele Commager stated, "The fact is that censorship always defeats its own purpose, for it creates, in the end, the kind of society that is incapable of exercising real discretion." It is critical that as young people we be allowed to exercise freedom of choice in order to evolve into accountable members of a democratic society.

Thank you for your time.