

Good Morning,

My name is Alexandra Shapiro, I am an intern at Horizons, a community based not for profit organization in South Windham, CT, and a supporter for Bin Hartigan. I am here today to help Bin express his needs for the support and services given to him on a daily basis from Horizons. Bin is an extremely unique individual, who, without the aids provided to him through government funding, would not be where he is today. At 33 years old, Bin has received support from Horizons since he was 17, a senior in high school. Bin has Cerebral Palsy, and as you can see is strictly confined to a wheelchair. Amongst other health issues such as unhealthy kidneys, Bin faces many challenges that restrict him from living a life that does not require constant support.

Through talking to Bin about the specific needs he has, and the daily reliance on his caretakers, it is no stretch of the truth to say that without the continual government funding to help Bin receive the support he needs, the fulfilling life he knows and adores will likely disappear before his very eyes. He is newly engaged, and his dreams of marrying his fiancé Kellie, and supporting himself in a life one can be proud of, may be taken away drastically, or at the very least turned into a life that no individual would ask for.

Every morning Bin wakes up at 7:30am. He rolls out of bed, goes to the bathroom, brushes his teeth, washes his face, takes off his pajamas and puts on his work clothes, eats breakfast, gets his bag ready for the day, puts his coat on and jumps in the car for work. This routine may sound very familiar to you, as it is the simple, everyday morning routine we all go through before work, or class, or wherever it may be that we intend on going that day. However, this routine is not the every day routine that you and I are used to. In fact, it is very different. The same things that you and I are able to accomplish on a daily basis on our own, for Bin, require the help and support of a personal caretaker every single morning for every task he faces. So you can see, how something we may on occasion take for granted, or do without any real thought, that may come so easily to us, is something that takes a lot of time, and preparation for Bin. The same task that takes you and I just 10 minutes, may take Bin more than 30. It is only with the support of Horizons and the funding that Bin receives, that he is granted any amount of means that help him live a so called normal life. Because of the support from his caretakers, Bin is able to enjoy the simple activities in life that I too can relate to. Jeff, standing next to me, is an aid that has been working with Bin for 2 years. Jeff's support enables Bin to do things such as, shopping at the mall, going out to eat with his fiancé, hanging out with friends, taking small trip to NYC, visiting his parents around the corner, maintaining his apartment, paying his bills on time, and simply enjoying the life he has been given.

It seem obvious to me that Bin can not continue to live a life that enables him to feel like an independent adult, nor overcome the many challenges that confront him without the continual support and funding that he relies on. Just like Bin, there are many other individuals who rely on their support services to fulfill a promising life. Without the support Bin requires, what will become of this intelligent, caring, hopeful individual? He needs your help to keep living the life that he deserves. Please do not take away Bin's funding, and allow him to continue to be a productive member of our society. Thank you.