

Testimony

Submitted to the

Education Committee

March 23, 2009

SENATE BILL NO. 1139 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
AND THE ELIMINATION OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION GRANTS FOR
COOPERATIVE REGIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES).

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Susan Cotton-Bernstein, and I am a resident of South Windsor. I am here today to ask that you vote no on SB 1139.

I am the mother of two profoundly deaf children with cochlear implants, Briana, eleven and a half, and Owen, eight and a half. Both of my children have been successfully competing at grade level with tremendous support in the mainstream since kindergarten. This achievement would not have been possible without the early intervention they received at CREC Soundbridge. My family spent six years at Soundbridge utilizing their Birth to Three, audiological services, and pre-school programs. Neither child was linguistically prepared to attend a mainstream. Their acute audiological needs were only able to be effectively handled at this facility.

Special education and co-teaching in the mainstream is not a blanket solution for all children with permanent disabilities. There are a number of children who, with even extensive support, are not able to thrive in the mainstream. Every child with special needs is entitled to appropriate services for his individual educational program. Outplacement facilities are at times the only appropriate option to help a special education student thrive and develop to maximize potential for that child to become a contributing member to our society. It would be a travesty to believe that technology and specialized educational strategies could be replicated outside of this environment at the level necessary for these disabled populations.

We are indebted to the high quality staff for the specialized care that my special needs children received at Soundbridg. Regional centers like this one and others for children with other disabilities must be available to ensure the success of these students who require such attention. Please make this investment in our children and do not support SB 1139 so that these opportunities can continue to exist for all those who require this support.