



March 23, 2009

Testimony before Committee on Education

Re: H.B. #1139, "(Raised) An Act Concerning School Construction Projects and The Elimination of School Construction Grants for Cooperative Regional Special Education Facilities"

by

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Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleishmann, and Members of the Education Committee. I am Lynn Warner the Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 57-year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We have 23 local chapters that provide supports, services, and advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities throughout Connecticut.

I am here today to testify in support of **House Bill #1139, "(Raised) An Act Concerning School Construction Projects and The Elimination of School Construction Grants for Cooperative Regional Special Education Facilities"** as it will repeal section 10-76e of the Connecticut Statutes which violates two articles in the Connecticut Constitution, which discriminate against the civil rights of students with disabilities.

The Arc of Connecticut strongly believes that every student with an intellectual disabilities, has the right to a free and *appropriate* education in their home school, which is the school that child would attend if he/she did not have a disability, with their own neighborhood peers.

Essential funding should be appropriated to school districts in order to pay for trainings for teachers, administrators, and para-professionals regarding modifying curriculum, supporting students with disabilities, and how to advocate for what a child needs on their IEP – *instead of building segregated settings for students.*

Children with disabilities do not grow-up in a vacuum. By interacting with their non-disabled peers in a common and normal setting, such as school, it breaks down the barriers of fear and

misunderstanding. The future policy-makers learn that children with disabilities are *not* that different from themselves after all.

The Arc of Connecticut commends this Committee for raising House Bill #1139 and for the Committee's apparent understanding of just how unfair Statute 10-76e potentially is to children with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.