

My name is Abby Segall I live in Los Angeles California and would be in Hartford now to testify except I have been very ill.. I would like to talk to you about House Bill 428. This legislation is on behalf of my son David who passed away on June 19th 1999 from injuries he sustained in a automobile accident while coming home from the Special Olympics where he had just won two gold medals in track. The staff driving the van that David was being transported in had lost his license and had a warrant out for his arrest. He had never driven the van before, but as we were told, he was the only person left. The accident was caused by the carelessness of the driver. He reached down to pick up a drink can and that caused him to take his eyes off the road and led to my son's death. The seat belt that was put on David was improperly attached. David lived for 8 weeks 6 weeks in intensive care. He was in an induced coma hooked up to many machines monitoring every part of his body. He also had to endure several operations to try to correct his SEVERLY severed intestines. A few days before David died the doctors told us that he had severe sepsis and that he was not going to live. We were then asked to give staff permission to disconnect him from his life support, something no parent or family member should ever have to do. It is Connecticut's responsibility to keep those they serve safe and the State failed to do this. Help me help you devise protocols and procedures to ensure the safety of all people being transported by the state so a tragedy like this NEVER has to happen again.

David had lived at the Regional Center in Norwalk for over half of his life. He graduated from Norwalk High School in June of 1986 and walked in the procession with the rest of the students. He was an active participant in all the activities at the center, going on field trips, served and clean up after meals, swimming, athletics, etc. He went to work every day at STAR and earned money for the work he did. If he wasn't able to go to work for some reason he would be extremely upset. With the money David earned he would buy his own lunch. In January of 1999 because of his excellent attendance he became eligible to have 10 days paid vacation, 13 paid holidays, 5 paid sick leave days, two personal

days and 10 additional days of sick leave that were carried over from the year before. A very NORMAL life for any adult.

The staff at STAR loved him as well as the staff at the Regional Center. When we were unable to be with David during the holidays the staff at the Regional Center would ask if they could take David to their own homes to celebrate because they loved him so much. David was very funny. He didn't communicate the way a normal person would but we always knew what he wanted. We knew where every fire truck and every school bus was in certain parts of Norwalk because David would tell us. He was also big on gas stations. David stayed at our home over the week end when we resided in Stamford. In the car after picking him up on Friday afternoons we would do numbers and letters. We had the same dinner every Friday night, it was David's favorite and he was not a happy camper if I served something else. After we moved, because of my husband's job, we stayed in contact almost on a daily basis, to the end of his life, with the staff at the center to keep abreast of how David was doing. We talked to David every Friday night and sang songs over the phone with him that we had done when he spent the week end with us. He would always smile, the staff told us, and sing the words to the songs he remembered. We would also come to visit David, with the entire family who lived in different parts of the country and Canada. In later years we were joined by our granddaughter Rebecca when she was a very little baby. Rebecca and David would play on the couch or the floor during our visits; they had a VERY special relationship.

When our daughters were serious about someone they were dating and it could lead to marriage, they would bring their prospective husbands to meet David. It was made very clear by David's sisters to these suitors that if they had any problems being with their brother David, and interacting with him or were unable to grow to love him as we all did their relationship would end. That ended up not to be the case and David gained two wonderful brother-in-laws. Both named David.

David taught me to deal with life's frustrations because he always plugged along. I learned from David that I could do anything I wanted because he showed me how. David never asked for anything but gave myself and the rest of his family tons of love. He made us smile, laugh and sometimes frustrated us just like any normal child would do.

I miss my son to the depths of my heart and farther. Seeing his pictures brings joy to my heart but it also brings a very deep sense of loss and a hole in me that can never be filled again. David was the center of my life as he was our families

Please help me to pass this bill, with the requests. That are explained in the bills description that you have. I would like to add to these requests. That the drivers be required to have a Public Service License that does a investigation of the persons driving record, a criminal background check and a medical exam before they are hired to make sure they have the capabilities to drive clients under the care of the State of Connecticut. I would also request that the license be reissued every two years after the same requirements at met. It should be required that the departments who are effected by this enforce these requirements.

That a request for a freedom of information act be able to be asked for by ARC of Connecticut or any other persons or advocacy agency for the disabled in the state of Connecticut

PLEASE PLEASE do not make another family go through this kind of tragedy
Loosing a loved one or loosing any one to carelessness should not be acceptable.

Thank you for taking your time to read this explanation.