

Dear Representative Fleischmann,

The costs for special education services have skyrocketed in recent years resulting in a higher tax burden for our towns and cities and leaving less funding available for overall educational services. Whereas school district professionals seek to provide the most appropriate services for students identified with special needs, they have increasingly been challenged on their recommended placements and programs by parties seeking more expensive, and oftentimes, less appropriate educational placements.

School Boards and parents all too often find themselves in hearings when there is a dispute between them regarding the placement or services prescribed for a student. Connecticut has been an anomaly in this nation in that it places the burden of proof in these hearings squarely on Boards of Education. *The burden of proof should rest with the party requesting the hearing.* This will likely result in fewer unnecessary challenges, lower expenditures in placements and legal fees for school districts, and the most appropriate (and cost-effective) placements for students with special needs.

Please bring Connecticut's burden of proof regulations into line with the federal legal practice of placing the burden of proof on the party who is requesting the hearing.

Sincerely,

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