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Education Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 5100  
300 Capital Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator DeFronzo, Representative Tercyak, and Members of the Education Committee:

Re: HB5425—AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION

I am writing to you in opposition of Proposed Bill #HB 5425 that requires that the burden of proof lies with the party requesting the special education hearing. This is usually the parents or guardians of the special education child.

The current law states that the burden of proof is the responsibility of the school district to prove that it has provided a “Free, Appropriate, Public Education” through the Individual Education Plan or IEP.

The current law we have in Connecticut works well because school districts have the records and staff and well as experts that can go to for assistance. This includes expert witnesses. Many schools already have plenty of access to information about the programs they provide to the various needs of special education students. If there is the unlikely situation that they do not have it, they know area towns that do.

As the parent of a child classified as special needs, I can tell you from experience the majority of us do not have these same options and resources as the schools. Many of the parents also do not have the financial resources to even bring these experts into the process to help our child. We also do not know where to even begin to look. I am one of them. In my school district there are also many parents who do not speak English and would not be able to even begin to know how to deal with this process to best help their child. There is no way a parent would be able to have a fair hearing in a process like this.

Allowing this Bill would essentially deny a special education child to get the proper help they need so that they can grow and learn to be a productive member of society.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate you opposition to Proposed Bill #HB 5425.

Sincerely,

Roberta E. Lauria