Written Testimony of Terry Tabler, for Ellen Tabler
Monday, March 1, 2010
Public Health Committee

HB 5307 An Act Concerning the Filling of Prescriptions for Antiepileptic Drugs

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today, on behalf of my sixteen year-old daughter Ellen, her mother and my wife Ann, and Ellen's two college-aged siblings, Sally and Stewart.

We are residents of Newtown, Connecticut where we own a home, work, worship and play. I am a relatively new member of this club – that is the "Parents of Children with Epilepsy Club". One is not so much invited into this fraternity, as one is shoved. Until two years ago when she was diagnosed with epilepsy, my daughter Ellen was a competitive gymnast and an "A" freshman student. Today she is a junior at Newtown High School, struggling to maintain a "C" average, wondering if she will get into college, and when – or if – she will obtain her driver's license.

Even with the burden of Epilepsy, Ellen for the most part does indeed *appear* to be a "normal" teenage girl. Only her family, teachers and best friends know she has epilepsy, or would even recognize if she had a seizure in their presence. While Ellen did experience two tonic-clonic seizures prior to diagnosis and the initiation of treatment, she has not suffered one since. Ellen does though exhibit simple partial (frontal) seizures. These are relatively mild, brief (3-5 second in duration) epileptic activity with no loss of consciousness…but none-the-less are disruptive. What Ellen's seizures lack in intensity, they often recompense in frequency.

With her current regimen of Lamictal™ (now available as the generic lamotrigrine) and Lyrica™ (pregabalin), we have been mostly successful in reducing Ellen's episodes of simple partial seizures to: on a great day – none, and on a normal day - just a handful. But on a bad day – triggered by test induced stress, menstruation, lack of sleep, or multiple other known and unknown variables – Ellen may suffer 20 to 40 seizures. Often she loses count. During a recent chemistry mid-term, she thinks she had about 30. In a test that most students completed in two hours, Ellen toiled over for three, just to score a 53.

Committee members, you can help Ellen and thousands of other Epilepsy patients in Connecticut control one very important seizure variable – dosage. You heard testimony from Dr. Alessi about the importance of a consistent supply of medication. Control of this single but critical variable may just make the difference between a passing and a failing grade, obtaining a drivers license, or being accepted into a university.

Thank you for you consideration of House Bill 5307.