

Gary Allen  
424 G Emmett Street  
Bristol, CT 06010

Thank you for allowing me the time to express my concerns about consolidating the Board of Education and services for the Blind with the Department of Education. I think that it is essential that we keep Services for the Blind as a stand alone agency. If services for the Blind is combined with another agency it may delay essential services that blind or low vision people need in order to go to school or start a new job. Services for the Blind has specialized services for example supplying material that blind students need in order to attend classes, whether it be K – 12 or college, or start a new job.

Blind people need materials and services such as Books in several different formats I.E. Brail, Large Print, or in audio format. Blind people also need hardware and software for receiving and disseminating information, for example software that will read the information that is displayed on a computer screen, or a video magnifier that will enlarge printed text onto a monitor.

Services for the Blind is unique because it provides services like orientation and mobility, Social Work services and Rehab Teachers to people of all ages. People in different age groups need different services. I fear that if services for the blind is consolidated with another agency that may not understand the needs of Senior Citizens, or a person in the workforce.

Because of the help that I received from services for the blind I am working and have worked most of my adult life. They helped me obtain the resources that I needed to go to college and provided me with services to assist me with finding employment after I graduated.

As an independent living advocate with Independence Unlimited I have the chance to help people seeking services form different agencies. I would hate to see services for the Blind get swallowed up by another agency and create more of a bureaucracy for people that are in need of services. Trying to get in touch with someone at the department of Social Services is extremely difficult for me and even harder for someone with an emotional or physical disability. It would be detrimental to the blind community if it is more difficult for people that are blind or have low vision to receive services then it already is.

Thank you for your time.