

March 3, 2011

To: Senator Edith Prague and Fellow Committee Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of myself as well as many other blind people in the state of Connecticut to urge you to vote against the consolidation of BESB with the State Department of Education and the Department of Social Services. I feel that if this consolidation takes place, the needs of the blind children and adults will not be met properly and in the long run, everyone will suffer. The blind adult population will not be able to receive the proper vocational rehab training, mobility skills, and other alternative learning techniques to help them to become gainfully employed and to become as independent as possible. The Department of Social Services already has their own heavy case-load of clients and if this consolidation were to take place, everyone would be lost in the shuffle and no one's needs will be adequately met. The same is true for the children's services of BESB being consolidated with the State Department of Education. Blind children need to learn adequate skills in Braille, cane travel, and other alternative techniques in order for them to become well educated and as independent as possible. Their needs will also not be met adequately if this consolidation takes place.

Please give this matter your careful consideration and please vote against this consolidation which will only hurt everyone involved and no one will benefit from this action.

Sincerely,


Julie Hetfield, President, Stamford Area Chapter of the NFB (National Federation of the blind)

Appropriations Committee

Re: Public hearing concerning proposed consolidation of BESB (Board of Education and Services for the Blind) on March 4, 2011.

Fax: #860-#240:0027