

March 3, 2011

Dear Esteemed Members of the Appropriations Committee:

This letter comes out of grave concern regarding the proposed House Bill #6380 to eliminate the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.

I speak from experience, as the parent of a now 23 year old blind (since birth) son as well as the former Executive Director of the Parents' Association for the Blind, for the state of Connecticut.

Blindness is a unique disability. Due to the teaching of Braille, the use of adaptive technology, needing flawless transitions from preschool to grade school, to high school and on to secondary education, it requires services that are housed together and have open communication and a cohesive delivery of services. My son received services from BESB starting at the preschool level. He continues to receive services today through vocational rehabilitation and from their mobility staff as he transitions into finding a full time job and living independently. BESB has been at his side every step of the way.

Consolidation of this agency has been reviewed in the past. I have twice given testimony in open hearings on this subject. After reviewing the uniqueness of the job of this agency in the past, committee members have voted on the side of the blind population in the state of Connecticut.

I hope that after careful consideration of this agency, its blind population, the specialized services and personnel it provides that you will agree with those who reviewed similar proposals before you.

Please defeat House Bill #6380. I implore you to leave this agency intact.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gerri Snow  
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