The current suggested plan to split BESB into two pieces and place these two pieces in the Dept. of Social Services and the Dept. of Education will **destroy** the effectiveness of the services delivered to the blind community of CT. The Dept. of Social Services has a budget of approximately $6.2 billion dollars. The transfer of approximately $7.1 million dollars – representing the Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Services programs from BESB funding provided by the state of CT will be lost in the Dept. of Social Services. It would represent approximately 1.1% increase in DSS overall budget. The Dept. of Education has a budget of $3.6 billion dollars. The transfer of the Children's Services program from BESB to the Dept. of Education would represent approximately $4.8 million dollars, which would increase Dept. of Ed. Budget by approximately 1.25%. Once again, the Children's Services would be lost in this department. When the oversight council was established and when the new Board of Directors was established, the commissioner of DSS or their designate was to attend the oversight council meetings as well as the new Board of Directors meetings. No representation from DSS was ever provided to either one of these entities. Representatives from the Dept. of Education (statisticians) came to oversight council meetings on a couple of occasions to discuss the testing of blind children and the results of standardized tests. Their conclusion was that since the numbers of blind and deaf/blind children were so small, that the results of their testing were inconclusive. When confronted with the idea that the blind and deaf/blind children should not be tested by themselves and numbers analyzed as such, but rather their scores should be included in the results from fully sighted children, the idea was rejected. In reality, the blind and deaf/blind children will be competing with their fully sighted counterparts throughout their lives.

BESB has had a considerable amount of success placing blind people in good paying jobs, depending on educational experience. 95% of blind students graduate from High School in CT. The average amount of all students graduating High School across the country is approximately 68%. It is my understanding that the move to split BESB will save four positions approximating $400,000 in costs. I will now outline some changes that will save millions of dollars in the state of CT if the legislature decides to consider these changes and adopt them. The state of CT provides BESB with $11.7 million dollars a year. The average BESB client in the state of CT costs approximately $3,500 per year in services rendered. The state legislature costs the state of CT $80 million dollars per year. The legislature is made up of 36 senators and 151 representatives, totaling 187 individuals. The legislature has between 400 – 500 people that work for them. The total consumption for the legislatures and the 400 – 500 people is $65 million dollars. An additional $13 million dollars is provided for the auditing function which comes under the legislative branch. Finally, approximately $2 million dollars is provided for 6 commissions which have been established by the legislature.

The following is a list of methods by which the legislature can save considerable sums of money. Eliminate legislative stipends to legislators for local travel within their district. Eliminate stipends for travel back and forth to Hartford for meetings. Eliminate stipends of chairmanships of committees. Savings estimated are at $1.7 million dollars. Reduce the total numbers of individuals that work for legislators. It is estimated that between 400-500 people work for the 187 legislators. I will use 450 as an average in my

calculations. Looking at just the cost of the legislators and their assistants, the average cost per person is approximately $102,000 per year. This number means that approximately 2.4 people work for each legislator – if this number was reduced to no more than 2, the savings is estimated at $7,750,000. Furthermore, I would reduce the number of commissions to two. The two that I would recommend saving would be for children and the aged. Savings would be approximately $1.2 million dollars. If the legislature changed the number of hours that state employees worked from 35 hours to 40 hours, the estimated savings would be $500 million dollars. The legislature needs to reign in the union influence. The state of Wisconsin is addressing that, Ohio is working on that, and 38 other states, including CT are awash in red ink. In order for the state of CT to right its financial ship, it needs to cut costs and reduce taxes, so that companies will once again find CT to be a favorable environment in which to locate. Destroying BESB and the services rendered to the blind community by this proposed split, is picking on a group of people whose every day life is a struggle