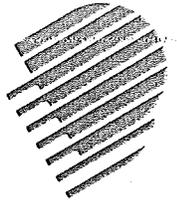


STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



March 7, 2011

To: Education Committee
Re: Raised Bill HB 6501

Good morning Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Margaret Cohan, and I am a Disability Policy Special for the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities. The Council is a Governor appointed body of persons with disabilities, parents of children with developmental disabilities and agency representatives that serve people with developmental disabilities. We receive federal funding from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities to implement the Developmental Disabilities Act and to that end, we promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities.

The Council supports Raised Bill No. 6501 "AN ACT CONCERNING DELAYS IN THE EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS SUSPECTED OF REQUIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES". The Council knows it has been well researched that early intervention is vitally important to not only children with learning disabilities who need special education to achieve success but any child who needs special education. Any delays in the special education process can lead to unnecessary frustration and delays in receiving services that are necessary for success. The Council along with advocates and parents feel the use of the SRBI process by local school districts has caused delays in children having a timely comprehensive special education assessment. This also has been noted on a national level so much so that the Federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in January 2011 warned in a letter that SRBI must not be used to delay or deny a timely evaluation for children who may have a learning disability. The Council has been so concerned we are co-sponsoring with the CT Parent Advocacy Center nationally known special education attorney Peter Wright in April to come to CT for a one-day conference on special education law with an emphasis on CT regulations for parents and professionals.

The Council would like to suggest that this bill be amended to include a requirement that school systems be required to keep data on when children with learning disabilities are referred to special education and when SRBI was first implemented to measure the time from identification of a potential problem for a child with learning to special education assessment and intervention.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.