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Hi my name is Gary Allen Thank you for taking the time to listen to my Testimony. I am here to appose bill HB6380 which would consolidate the Board of Education and Services for the Blind with the Department of education and the Department of Social Services effectively dissolving services for the blind. The Department of Education does not provide direct services and the department of Social Services is horribly inefficient and is over capacity. Blind People need specialized services the other agencies do not provide such as teachers for the Visually Impaired, Orientation and Mobility and, vocational rehabilitation and rehab teachers. They also provide services in a continuum of care meaning that they will provide most of the services that blind people need throughout their lives. Services for the Blind also provides reading material such as Braille Large print and books in audio format and Assistive Technology for example software and hardware that blind people use to receive or disseminate information.

BESB is an agency that works. Connecticut has a higher graduation rate and higher employment then most other states. Combining it with the department of social services an agency that is not working for the people it already serves would be detrimental to the blind community.

BESB provided the resources that I needed while I was in college and assisted me with finding employment after graduated. Because of BESB I have a full time job and own a condo. I am a tax payer.