

Written Testimony of Corrienne Gagliardi

3/1/11

Public Health Committee

**Testimony in support of HB6481, An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Lupus Education and Awareness Plan**

Senator Stillman, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. I am submitting the following written testimony in support of House Bill #6481.

Hello. My name is Corrienne Gagliardi, and I am 22 years old. I live in Newington, CT with my mother, step father, and siblings. My mother was diagnosed with Lupus almost 4 years ago, but that was no easy road to get to. She went away on vacation, and when she returned her ankles were extremely swollen. She called her primary doctor that she had had all her life. The doctor didn't feel the importance to see her immediately. He actually felt no importance to see her at all because of how "common" her symptoms were. A month went by without her being able to make an appointment, where she probably made the best decision of her life and get a second opinion. That doctor took one look at her ankles, ordered a lupus blood test, and figured out immediately what was going on. This sounds like its great news right? Well, that doctor also informed my mother that she was only two weeks away from dying. Her kidneys were below 40% functioning. This meant my mother had to go on endless medications, see doctor after doctor, just to try and save her life. If the first physician was aware of the symptoms that lupus exposed and how serious they were, she would have never been holding onto a mere thread of her life. The prednisone that my mother was taking made her gain 100 pounds, and completely took away her personality. It was so difficult to watch the strongest figure in my life slowly deteriorate in front of my eyes. Things just got worse when she had to go through all of the chemotherapy. Watching her get sick every day, loose her hair, how tired and warn down she was all the time, just to think that all of this could have been avoided had she just been diagnosed earlier.

If this bill was passed my mother would never have been that close to death. There is just no reason as to why lupus is something so many people have never heard of. I have an overwhelmingly large chance of getting lupus myself, and I would take comfort in knowing that there are people out there who are informed, who do know what is going on, and realize what a powerful disease lupus is. Affecting millions of people each and every year, it honestly still surprises me how little the world knows about it. How many millions more does lupus have to affect before the world hears about it?

Pass this new legislation and change the lives of millions. You have so much power right in your hands to make a difference for the state of Connecticut. What are you waiting for.