

Written Testimony of Sheryl Candia
February 28, 2011
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

I am a sixty-one year old, white, married, female, mother of seven grown children. My education is limited to High School, and some college; and when I was able to work I was a Special Deputy Sheriff for New Haven County. I live in a middle class neighborhood, in West Haven; from which I have resided for the past thirty four years.

I was finally diagnosed with Lupus, after suffering with many illnesses and ailments and excruciating pain for about four years. I couldn't seem to find a physician who knew a reason or a cause of all of my problems. Even now I will come across a physician who understands nothing about the disease of Lupus! I will say that I do have a group of many specialists for all of my individual health issues, that are very knowledgeable and helpful. However there are a list of people in the community that will show no compassion or understanding, for such a disease! These include Nurses and Physicians, and Pharmacists, as well as Dentists and regular neighbors. It is very frustrating to have the need to explain over and over what Lupus is and what it causes and does. If there was more awareness about Lupus, and more Physicians educated on the illness, many patients may not have to go through the frustration, and the months and years of wondering what is wrong with them. It is very frightening to feel so sick and be in so much pain, and have no one that can tell you what is wrong! No relief in sight!!!! It is also an awful feeling to have a Physician not believe you, or criticize you for the symptoms you are describing. I had one Physician tell me that he would have to put me through all the same tests, and scans etc. that I had already suffered through for the past four years. This was all because my diagnosing Physician had moved away. In my search for another Doctor, I encountered many very ignorant and uninformed Doctors, about the disease of Lupus. The mental and emotional abuse I was put through, should have been avoidable. Maybe if this Education and Awareness Plan was in place at that time; I wouldn't have had to suffer in that manner. I would like to hope that this Bill will save many people the agony that I experienced.

Thank you again for introducing this important legislation. I believe it will have a positive impact on the lives of patients living with lupus in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Candia