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SUPPORT for Bill 5357

An Act Concerning a Deaf Child Bill of Rights

To: The Honorable Fleischman, Co-Chair; The Honorable Stillman, Co-Chair; The Honorable Nafis; Members of the Education Committee

My name is Allison Malerba, and I am a teacher of the hearing-impaired with the CREC Soundbridge program in Wethersfield, CT. I write to you today in support of Bill 5357. As a practitioner working with the birth-three population in Connecticut, I have the opportunity to see these young children in their earliest years acquire critical developmental skills that help them to prepare for their educational experiences beyond their time in an early intervention program. I also happen to be part of the transition experience as these children and their families shift from Part C of IDEA to Part B. All too often I see the communication needs of these young children who are deaf and hard of hearing made secondary to a greater educational plan when communication is the fundamental factor in determining their future success in education and life.

I believe that all educators who encounter this population of students want to give them the appropriate tools for educational access, but do not always have the knowledge to prepare and address the unique needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. If approved, Bill 5357 would provide schools with an outline to develop an educational plan that focuses on the individual communication needs of each child. If Connecticut's aim is to improve education for all children, then Bill 5357 is essential in improving the educational success of children who are deaf and hard of hearing. I hope that you will support this bill.

Sincerely,

Allison M. Malerba, M.E.D., CTRS
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