

**Testimony in Support of HB5357
An Act Concerning a Deaf Child Bill of Rights**

March 2, 2012

Hello, my name is Carey. I am a parent of deaf children. We reside in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

We are happy to see Governor Malloy's emphasis on education for all Connecticut's children. Deaf children need to have that support and a good quality education like everyone else. That is why I support the Deaf Child Bill of Rights or House Bill #5357.

We have two children attending the American School for the Deaf part time and mainstreamed for part of the day. We had to make sure that their language and communication needs were met at both schools. This discussion took place during our PPT meetings.

This bill will make the IEP focus on the language and communication needs of every child attending schools in Connecticut and ensure that their needs will be met.

Deafness is a communication disability and children who are deaf have many challenges. They need quality teachers that can provide fully accessible information to the student. This requires special skills and training, special equipment, deaf role models and peers that can communicate with each other. Currently in Connecticut, this does not always happen despite people's good intentions.

Good use of the language and communication plan can help parents and PPT teams get off to a good start to be sure the child's unique communication needs will be met. Eleven other states have a Deaf Child Bill of Rights (DCBR), and Connecticut should as well.

What I have heard is that the other states with a DCBR have improved the school performance of deaf children. I believe we need to do the same.

Thank you for your attention.