

**Testimony of Representative Jamie Gauthier
Education Committee Public Hearing
March 5, 2012**

H.B. 5357 AN ACT CONCERNING A DEAF CHILD BILL OF RIGHTS

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, for the record my name is Jamie Gauthier of Preston and I am here to testify in support of HB 5357 An Act Concerning A Deaf Child Bill of Rights.

My daughter, Alexis was born deaf and received her first unilateral cochlear implant when she was three years old. She decided to get bilaterally implanted when she turned 15. This did not fix her hearing but helped her tremendously.

I have had a great deal of success in the school system in regards to her IEP. However, there were times when Alexis was in elementary school that I really had to fight hard to get the teachers to understand Alexis' needs based on her disability. The educational team did not understand her communication needs fully. It wasn't until they knew her for some years that they were able to get a better grasp on meeting her needs.

If this bill gets passed this will help eliminate many hurdles parents have to get the proper specific education their children need to be a successful student.

Requiring a Language and Communication Plan to be part of our children's IEP to a state level would significantly impact a deaf child's education immensely.