

Testimony of Rachel Kane

3/5/12

Education Committee

In Support of Bill 5357

An Act Concerning a Deaf Child Bill of Rights

Good afternoon Representative Fleischman, Senator Stillman, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Rachel Kane, I live in Ledyard, and I am hard of hearing. I am here to speak about my support of Bill 5357. I was born in November 2000 with hearing loss. We might not have known about my hearing loss until I was four or five, but I had a newborn screening. In July of 2000, that became a law that every baby has to get a screening at birth. Thank you for passing that law. Bill 5357 (the bill that is being brought up today) states that every hard of hearing or deaf student needs to have a plan about how they will communicate, or how they will learn in order to make it easier for them. I luckily had a planning meeting, and the discussions required on the bill were brought up. But unfortunately, my parents and other people at the meeting had to improvise with only some help from my audiologists at my audiology place, Soundbridge. They weren't really quite sure what had to be done in order to make sure I learned and was educated as well as the other kids. This bill should be passed to make sure that all kids like me get a meeting, and that people involved know what to bring up.

My school, the Integrated Day Charter School, is a very cooperative school, and they understand what we need to make sure I could hear and learn. For example, at one of the planning meetings, assembly was brought up. Even though the speakers were using microphones I still couldn't hear them all that well. So they made a plan. My parents and the music teacher who ran the assembly spent an afternoon hooking up my FM to the microphone so that I could hear better. They also found out that it works SO much better when I sit up front so every assembly we hook up the FM and I sit up front. Also because of the planning meeting, I can hear at lunch! My audiologists, my parents and teachers talked about how noisy the lunch room is and that it must be really hard to hear for me. After discussing it at the meeting, my mom and my audiologist found out that the best place for me to hear in the lunch room is with my back to the wall. So now I sit with my back to the wall every day in the lunch room.

Another important point is that, as I just learned, without a group of people helping the hearing impaired child learn, they don't succeed educationally all the time. 75 to 80% of hearing impaired kids don't reach goal on the Connecticut Mastery Test. I am in the 25% that do achieve goal, I am even past goal in most subjects. But those numbers are not fair. Those 75% of kids should have every chance to pass these tests, but if it's hard to hear and they aren't learning anything, they aren't going to. This bill should be passed so that during the meetings, people can discuss how well the child is doing in school, and what they can do to help the child. Without these meetings, I couldn't have written this testimony and presented it today.

Thank you for your support and I have my FM so if you have any questions, I can pass it to you and I'll try to answer them.