

Environment Committee  
Public Hearing  
Friday, March 22, 2013

Testimony Against Re: HB-6654

Authorize the Award of Food Vending Services In State Parks and Forests

Dear Chairs and Committee Members:

I am a legally blind Connecticut resident that owns/operates Gillette's Castle Food Concession. I would like to point out to you members of the Committee how damaging this could be to the Blind of the State of Connecticut. I am part of a program made for individuals that are blind or visual impaired. This program gives us the opportunity to be viable members of society in ways of giving us small businesses in state buildings and state parks. I employ 7 staff members plus myself and I am giving them the opportunity that so many don't have these days in this economy by supplying them with steady work. This also generates tax dollars that are then put back to Connecticut and also keeps seven more people off Unemployment. Not to mention the number of Blind that would also then end up on Unemployment and all their families that that would affect. This change would also affect the future generation of Blind Connecticut Residents because the less opportunity we have throughout the state, the longer and harder it becomes for us as a group to allow the opportunity to be passed on from generation to generation of Blind Operator's and their families. I am also a father of four and the sole provider of income for our family and displacing me from this park is going to become a HUGE hardship that I do not know how easy it would be to overcome. Before entering into Business Enterprises and Services for the Blind I had applied and interviewed for job after job after job. When I explained that I have all the qualifications but that I was legally blind I was told I would become a liability if hired. While this is unfair, and most likely not even legal, this is the truth of the matter. This is what all Blind Operators face and will endure if you pass this bill. I implore you to vote against the authorization of the awarding of food vending services in state parks and forests.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Braccia, Jr.,  
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