

February 26, 2013

Dear Brenda Kupchick,

Thank you for being interested in the plight of adults on the autism spectrum. I am a 59 year old woman with a non-verbal learning disability and autism. I was misdiagnosed as "slow" while I was in the public school system and as a result ended up working in a factory packing boxes for 21 years. During these years I knew instinctively that I had much more to offer and felt painfully frustrated by being trapped in a job such as this. I went to a doctor for diagnostic testing in 2000 and found out that I was not "slow" but had autism. From age 47 to 57, I "wore my knuckles out" knocking on the door of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services asking for education and therapy for my neurological issues. I knew in my heart that I had potential and wanted to better myself. During those ten years I was repeatedly told that they could not help me. This perplexed me because the Bureau of Rehabilitation refused to give me assistance with no clear reason. I felt like a race horse chomping at the bit, I knew there was more out there educationally and job wise for me, so I kept looking for help. Being misunderstood and long-overlooked those many years had robbed me of precious opportunities, experiences, and better pay.

Last fall, while on my quest for help, I was told by a special education tutor from Fairfield, Bonita Lee, that Barbara Kupchick was concerned about the lack of opportunities for adults in Connecticut who are on the autism spectrum. Bonita introduced me to Barbara and I explained my needs to her. Barbara asked what I was looking for in the way of help. I told her that my major need was a program that provided internships with local businesses because a satisfying career was my top priority.

There are so many people with autism in their adult years who have the need and desire to learn. Many are presently floundering due to educational oversight during their years in the public school system. Their educational and social needs could be addressed through participation in internships with local businesses. With this training these adults could go out into the world, feel pride, and make contributions to society. Please vote yes to Proposed H.B. No. 56360.

Sincerely,

Joan Sclare