

Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann,

My name is Leah Sheikowitz and I am a State of Connecticut Certified Teacher. I am also a parent of two special needs children. I am writing this testimony to ask you to ensure that the wording is changed in the education law to make sure it is clear that all parents have the right to withhold enrolling their child in kindergarten, and that the children are not denied services by their home district because the parent exercised their right to start them a year later.

My 4 year old son, who is enrolled in the Montville School District, has a birthdate of November 29, 2009. He has a significant physical delay in both fine motor and gross motor skills. The district is threatening to cut off his physical therapy and occupational therapy services if we don't enroll him in kindergarten for the 2014-15 school year. The added wording in this law will allow him to continue to receive the services he deserves. It will also allow him an extra year of growth, which will ensure a better and more enjoyable education for him in the future.

Children with a need for special education should be given the same rights as all regular education children. With new guidelines in effect for full day kindergarten, children shouldn't be forced to start their formal education when they are clearly not ready.

Please make it a priority this session to change the wording of this law. It will ensure a better education for many children, and, above all, we will produce more confident learners in the state of Connecticut.

In closing, I support Section 2 of RB5562.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Leah Sheikowitz