

My name is Amy St. Arnauld Rasten and I reside in Southington. I support Senate Bill No. 1055 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS. I have tried to advocate for my three children on the local level for gifted programming as I have seen the demise of wonderful programs that were once available to identified gifted students enrolled in Southington Public Schools. I was told several years ago by our Board of Education Chairman that "the State sees no need for gifted programming as these children can have their needs sufficiently met in the classroom." I disagree. My son, Jesse Rasten, was a part of our towns former Project Discover Program. It was there that he was inspired and saw possibilities for learning. He is now 15 and has received the CABA Leadership award, is enrolled in Project Lead the Way, a Drive Team and Design Team member on Southington's FIRST Robotics Team 195. He is most proud of the work he did this past fall mentoring Southington's first ever FIRST Lego League at the elementary school level. There has been no money allotted in the proposed budget to continue or expand the program. My 10 year old daughter was identified as gifted and there are no free programs offered for her in our public school system. Parents of identified gifted students have no options other than paying for their children to participate in extracurricular activities. There needs to be legislation to protect the rights of accelerated learners and programs with trained staff offered within the school day to meet their needs. It should not be left to PTO's, parents and volunteers within the community to try to provide and fund what should be a right to gifted learners within the public school system.

Sincerely,  
Amy St. Arnauld Rasten  
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