

This testimony was given in person yesterday. Good afternoon Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis and Distinguished members of the Environment Committee. My name is Mary Silverberg. I am a resident of West Hartford. I am also legally blind. I am the vice chair of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind. I am also on the Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities. As a member of the National Federation of the Blind, I oppose section 6 of SB 1061 and respectfully request that it be removed from the Bill. Section 6 will remove employment opportunities for at least three blind people who currently operate vending stations at DEEP facilities and for many more in our state parks in the future. People who manage and run these stations are earning a salary and paying taxes. We would not like to see them displaced from their jobs which allow them to support their families, by some corporate entity which has no personal stake in the success of these businesses. Without these jobs, it is too easy for these blind vendors to become part of a larger number of people with disabilities who are underemployed. We do not want to see them have to join social-welfare programs which are ultimately much more costly to society. In summary, for these reasons, I am asking you to remove section 6 from SB 1061.

Mary H Silverberg
111 Newington Road
West Hartford CT 06110