

Testimony
Karen Patrocinio

Bill H.B. 5174

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CHILDREN'S STATE FLOWER
To establish Michaela Petit's Four-O'Clocks as the children's state flower.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi. Those simple words were Michaela Rose Petit's mission statement in life. A New York Times article dated 7/29/2007 quoted Johanna Petit Chapman, Michaela's aunt, as saying "Losing her at age 11 is possibly the greatest loss of all, because she never got the chance to show us just how great she could have been."

At the time of the tragedy in 2007, Dr. Petit asked his brother in law, Dennis Chapman, to go back to the house and get the flowers he and his 11 year old daughter Michaela planted. Her favorite Four O'Clock flowers started a fundraising project called Michaela's Garden Project, designed to encourage families and youth to become more involved in community service that helps many families in need.

As a volunteer for Michaela's Garden Project, I hold in my hand the seeds of hope and change one garden at a time. I have witnessed first-hand students from agriscience schools growing and caring for the plants. "Students are working on agricultural skills as well as working on leadership skills and giving back to the community" as stated by Sarah Patulak a student at Glastonbury High School. Girl Scout Troops 65109 and 65062 from Killingly dedicated their time planting, weeding, watering, fertilizing and caring for their garden at the Killingly Public Library to earn a badge. Students from Lincoln Elementary School in New Britain helped start a Michaela's Garden at Walnut Hill Park in New Britain. The smiles and enthusiasm of children who have attended our events are beyond words.

I stand before you today, people whom have all achieved greatness and effected change in the state of Connecticut and will continue to do so, and I ask that you pass bill H.B. 5174 an act of establishing a Children's state flower. I ask that you adopt Michaela Petit's Four O'Clocks, whose lineage can be traced back to the tragic event in 2007, as Connecticut's children's state flower. I ask that you give Michaela Rose Petit the opportunity to realize her greatness and be the change she wished to see in the world.

Thank you for your time.