

My name is Allison Quirion, resident in the town of Hebron. I am submitting testimony in opposition to House Bill 5552.

I do not believe that adding another layer to the already lengthy and long special education due process procedures is beneficial.

Connecticut already has a hearing process to resolve disputes that arise from special education. When a party requests a due process hearing, federal law already requires local school districts to schedule a resolution session to attempt to resolve the dispute. It would appear that an “adjudicative process” as outlined in HB 5552 is duplicative and will only result in further delays.

In my opinion this “adjudicative process” will not result in a better resolution than the process that currently exists. Please consider that it is not unusual for hearing officers to take 6 months to a year to issue a due process decision. Adding an additional requirement for an “adjudicative process” just further delays a decision about what a child needs in order to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE).

Further concerns are:

- No timeline in which the adjudication process will take place.
- Evidence from this process will be used during due process proceedings, without parents having the opportunity to obtain at public expense a truly independent expert to challenge the adjudicator’s findings.
- If parties are permitted to have legal representation, this will simply add to the cost of the resolution process for parents.

Although this bill may be trying to add another layer to resolve disputes, it **ONLY** delays parental rights to due process procedures.