

Carroll, Rhonda

From: Nancy Rebold <nancy@nrebold.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2016 5:55 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Bill Number 347

Testimony in Support of raised Bill No.347

Nancy Rebold
Weston, CT
Child Advocates of Connecticut
Founder, Board member ,volunteer

Esteemed members of the Judicial Committee- Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of Raised Bill 347. "An Act Establishing a Program for Court Appointed Special Advocates in Certain Juvenile Court Matters."

Bill No. 347 is no cost to state budget. Funds needed will be raised in the community.

As a volunteer advocate for over 8 years and a founding Board Member of Child Advocates of SW Connecticut I have seen the positive impact a volunteer advocate can have on the life of abused or neglected children.

I have worked with one child for the last eight years. She has been in the childcare system since age three as have her 4 siblings. Since age three she has had very little to no contact with these siblings. Both her parents' parental rights were terminated when she was nine years old. At about this time, she was diagnosed with several disorders including Post Traumatic Stress and Reactive Attachment Disorder. I have been with her through more than seven caseworkers and she has been placed in approximately a dozen placements including foster homes, a psychiatric hospital, shelters, group homes and residential therapeutic communities. I have been the only consistent person in this child's life throughout the eight years. We speak weekly and she knows she can contact me anytime day or night.

As a volunteer I am able to speak directly with the child, her parents, foster parents, attorneys, social workers, school personnel, and all others involved in her life. I have been referred to many times as the "keeper of the crypt" because I am the only one who is completely familiar with her entire history.

At one point after working with this child for several years, she asked me how much I was paid for spending all the time I spend with her. I told her that I didn't get paid at all and I volunteered because I wanted to help her fulfill the potential she fully deserves. The look in her face was one I will never forget. It was if she I was the first person who ever told her she as a worthwhile human being who wasn't "work" for someone. She refers to the fact that I am not paid often and has this fact with her siblings and friends. This incident made me realize more than anything else how important the role volunteers at Child Advocates of Ct play and the point that I realized we must try to speak up for as many children as we can in the state of Connecticut.

Please support Bill No. 347 so that more vulnerable children like the one I advocate for can be served by a volunteer advocate.

Sincerely,
Nancy Rebold