

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara
Chair, House Committee on Education
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of H-7721

Chair McNamara:

My name is Megawati Soetanto and I am testifying in support of H-7721, a bill that would strengthen parental rights in the IEP process. The way things are currently, an IEP can be changed without parent consent. In addition to this, when changes are made, whether to a student's placement or based on evaluations, the parent doesn't get to review evaluations prior to the meeting or visit the new educational setting.

This bill would:

- Require schools to share evaluation reports and other important documents with parents in advance of IEP meetings;
- Give parents the right to observe placements proposed for their children; and
- Restores the requirement to obtain written parental consent before implementing changes to a student's IEP.

I am supporting this bill because I have been fighting with the district just to put my son in IEP which he really needed.

- *My son was diagnosed with ADHD, ANXIETY, DEPRESSIONS/ TOURATTE, SOCIAL EMOTIONAL INTERACTION WITH PEERS, aggression. I had requested for my son to be in IEP for years, school district reject the IEP and only offer 504 plan, which said it is sufficient for my son. This is not helping him.*
- *Clinician even based on multiple evaluation to request to put my son in IEP that was denied last year 2023.*
- *Teachers / staff not providing the support even its listed in the 504 plan. School had put him in a regular classroom instead 2 teachers' classroom. Found out the extra teachers in classroom, its not support him in 1:1*
- *As a parent, we should not be struggling for years to get any assistance or support in this state.*
- *I am fighting and advocating for my son. Without a professional help either from RIPIN OR CLINICAN TO be present in the meeting. School does not take us seriously.*
- *My son needs a smaller classroom, 1:1 supports in school works, needs lots of emotional supports, encouragement, movement breaks, redirections.*
- *my son wears his headset during test /assignments and require a quieter setting and even on the bus. With his current situation, the school/ teachers labeled him as "the kid who disrupt the class not able to sit still, fidgeting, not paying attention, refused to do school work, not prepared coming to class (he have all his supplies in his bags), he gets in trouble even when he raised his hand ----- and gets a lots of detention, he is not able to use his headset. I had to advocate for my son*

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- *if school provide the adequate supports. My son thrive in his classwork. Why is it so hard for a parent to get the help?*

I urge you to vote in favor of bill H-7721.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of H-7721.

Megawati Soetanto

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