

Deaf Child Bill of Rights Initiative Event

Governor's Mansion

Hartford, CT

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Remarks

By

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Good Evening Friends,

Governor Malloy has stated that Connecticut is about Educational Excellence. Time has arrived for educational needs of all children in Connecticut to be addressed appropriately. After all, they are Connecticut's future. I wholeheartedly agree with him.

However, we need to be sure that powers that be recognize the need to include children who are deaf and hard of hearing children. They constitute one per cent of all Connecticut school population. They are a low incidence population that is often overlooked in terms of addressing their unique language and communication needs as well as recognizing a wide educational achievement gap among these children as compared to children who can hear.

Research and professional literature indicate that intellectual functioning of children who are deaf and hard of hearing parallels the normal distribution of intellectual functioning among children who can hear. This achievement gap is not a reflection of their intellectual ability but rather a reflection of the lack of language and communication access they experience in educational settings.

This is not a Connecticut problem; it is a national problem. Eleven states in the United States – California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Texas—address this issue by enacting “Deaf Bill of Rights” legislation.

Connecticut was the first state in the U.S to help establish a permanent school for the deaf in the country almost 200 years ago, to be more accurate—195 years ago. Connecticut can continue to exercise its educational leadership in addressing language and communication needs for all children who are deaf or hard of hearing in all educational settings.

Thus, the rationale for a proposed legislation for “Deaf Child Bill of Rights” in Connecticut. Let us all –parents, deaf and hard of hearing community, professionals in the field, schools, friends and allies--work together to make this happen!

Thank you.