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RE: Opposed H5352 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES [SEE TITLE 16 CHAPTER 97 -- THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT] regarding LAC's

Dear Chair McNamara and HEW Committee Members:

I want to thank Representatives Cortvriend, Carson, Amore, Henries, Kazarian, Donovan, and Kislak for putting in this legislation, however I feel it is going to drive away those considering positions on their LAC. I have been a member of Cranston SEAC (LAC) 8 years. I live in the second largest metropolitan area in Rhode Island, and I was the only member for most of those years. At one meeting we had as many as 5 others and typically it was just me. I wonder how many of you have gone monthly and been part of your City/Town's LAC meetings? The number one problem is parent participation, and by putting all of these demands upon anyone thinking of running for these positions which are already difficult to fill is a wrong move.

This Bill has some great information that is needed, however let's look at the resources we currently have in place such as RIPEN.

As the Founder of Decoding Dyslexia Rhode Island I have listened and guided parents with many horror stories and seemingly no avenue to find fair resolution with an unbiased agenda. I found our SEAC because my child was being unfairly ignored and given misappropriate instruction. So, for me it was a godsend early on finding our SEAC. Those that hold these positions are unpaid and they are already soundboards to many parents during the week that call or email them, which is the most important part of their work. They often are mediators within the schools and navigate some difficult issues resolved.

With all of these types of Bills coming out, it is clear we have work to do and this should be held for further Study by a Special Education Legislative Committee that shall be comprised of all the stakeholders involved so brainstorming can resolve many of the issues we are all trying to accomplish.

I conclude with, this is well intended, however an unreasonable request.

With gratitude,

Suzanne

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