

## Steven Sepe

---

**From:** r4kidsrule@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2026 3:19 PM  
**To:** House Health and Human Services Committee  
**Subject:** H-7627 testimony

You don't often get email from r4kidsrule@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan /Louis P. DiPalma

Chair, House Committee on Health and Human Services

State House

Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of H-7627

Chair Donovan,

My name is Annette Coutu and I am testifying in support of H-7627, a bill that would allow children to stay in Early Intervention until the September after they turn three. The current Early Intervention system in RI is only required to serve children until their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday then they are immediately cut off. If children are still eligible for services, they are then supposed to be enrolled in their district's preschool special education program. Currently, finding a placement that meets the needs of these students is extremely difficult and children are losing out on valuable education and therapies, particularly when the child turns three after the school year is underway.

This bill would:

- Give families the choice of staying with their EI provider until the start of the school year after the child turns 3;
- Ensure continuity of care for children receiving services; and
- Provides adequate time and support for providers to ensure they are able to serve children past the age of 3.

I am supporting this bill because my granddaughter would of truly benefited from being left with her EI therapists and nurse instead of being dropped into a classroom with zero understanding of her rare disease and diagnosis. Her birthday is December 17<sup>th</sup> which the school system wanted to wait till after Christmas break to have her start so the staff could be given some sort of training on Epilepsy and Sturge-Weber Syndrome which is the rare disease Brielle was born with. That meant 3 weeks without any therapy, 3 weeks without a nurse on call, 3 weeks of no intervention, only to have her start the first week of the new year and then one week later have a left functional hemispherectomy which is where a neurosurgeon disconnected the left side of her brain. Had she been with EI at that time she would have had therapists on call to assist with her therapies at home, a nurse on call when there was a possibility of hydrocephalus, a team who knew her baseline, instead she was out of school for 4 months with intermittent therapies through the school as they had no idea how to help her, had to travel to and from Hasbro daily for therapy that should have been done in a rehabilitation program but at the time there was only one pediatric care facility and it was full. Her therapies would have been done with her EI therapists. Her outcome could have been so different had she had therapist that knew her, had she been left with her team until the fall when the new school year began.

I urge you to vote in favor of bill H-7627. This bill will provide the care these sweet babies need.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

Annette Coutu

[R4kidsrule@aol.com](mailto:R4kidsrule@aol.com)

401-450-5824

21 Highwood Dr. Coventry, RI 02816