

Testimony for SB1000

March 27, 2007

Senate Committee on Education

Hello, my name is Stephanie Falls and I reside in Plano. First, I want to thank you for this opportunity to express my opinion regarding SB1000. My opinions have been formed from my experiences, as a teacher, as a parent, and as an advocate. I am wholeheartedly in favor of this bill and believe it will provide much needed relief for some families while we **all** work to fix the **systemic** problems within Texas special education. In fact, we would not be having this discussion if FAPE were a reality for our special needs population in this state.

I have two teenage boys somewhere on the spectrum and would have greatly appreciated this type of bill six (6) years ago, before I was forced by circumstances into home-schooling due to the lack of appropriate services and lack of trained school personal. My appeals to the TEA went unheard and I knew that even if I had thousands of dollars to spend litigating, it would be practically impossible to receive a favorable hearing in this state. Fortunately I have been very successful in maintaining my children at or above grade-level and do not regret withdrawing my children from the system. I am unable to calculate the financial and emotional cost my family has paid for the inability and unwillingness of my school district to provide the individualized programming my children are legally and morally entitled to. Calculating the tax dollars the district spent to “shut me down” is impossible; but the total was

lobbyists, just beleaguered parents, overwhelmed with autism and not able to afford wasting precious time arguing with school officials over the definition of FAPE.

My family will not be directly impacted with the passage of SB1000. My oldest son will continue to be homeschooled, as he would have to repeat two years of school in order to receive credits towards graduation. My younger son flatly refuses to return to any organized education, public or private, due to the

My only interest in SB1000 is to insure that other families like mine are spared the heartache, the wasted time which is so critical to children with Autism, and the wasted expense required trying to fight the educational system. Unless you have experienced the anguish and frustration firsthand, you cannot understand how desperately this bill is needed.

I thank you for your time and your efforts on behalf of the children and citizens of this state.

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Please redact any personal information before entering into the official record.